

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 29 October 1985

THE SPEAKER (Mr Harman) took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

BILLS (3): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Stamp Amendment Bill.
2. Stamp Amendment Bill (No. 2).
3. Pay-roll Tax Amendment Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Mr Brian Burke (Treasurer), and read a first time.

PAY-ROLL TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Brian Burke (Treasurer), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Treasurer) [2.22 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is complementary to the Pay-roll Tax Amendment Bill. Together with that Bill, it implements the package of measures designed to relieve the burden of payroll tax, particularly on small and medium business undertakings announced in my Budget speech.

The Bill includes a provision to increase the annual payroll tax exemption by 10 per cent to \$220 000 as from 1 January 1986. This increase is significantly in excess of the 1984-85 inflation rate and is expected to provide a complete exemption to some 600 employers who are currently registered for payroll tax. The increase in the exemption level is accompanied by a corresponding increase to the payroll range over which a deduction can be claimed.

The Act presently specifies a tapered deduction range of \$200 000 to \$800 000. An employer whose annual payroll lies within that range is entitled to a deduction of an amount equal to \$200 000 less \$1 for each \$3 by which his annual payroll exceeds \$200 000. The deduction ceases altogether at \$800 000.

Under this Bill, the \$1 for \$3 taper will extend over a payroll range of \$220 000 to \$880 000. The overall cost of this measure is estimated at \$1.9 million in 1985-86 and \$4.6 million in a full year.

The Bill also contains a proposal to exempt from payroll tax those wages paid to trainees who are employed under the Australian traineeship system jointly established by the State and Commonwealth Governments. Exemption will assist the success of this scheme which will provide training for employment to a number of young Western Australians.

In addition, the Bill makes provision for payroll tax exemption to be provided to associations of local government authorities. This is in keeping with the principle which is already enshrined in the Act that local authorities should be exempt from payroll tax.

Finally, the Bill contains certain provisions which are necessary supplements to those contained in the Pay-roll Tax Amendment Bill which sets down lower payroll tax rates.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Hassell (Leader of the Opposition).

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS DUTY AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and First Reading

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Brian Burke (Treasurer), and read a first time.

Second Reading

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Treasurer) [2.25 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

As announced in the Budget speech, it is proposed to reduce the primary rate of financial institutions duty from 3c per \$100 to 2c per \$100. This follows the move by the Government last year to reduce the rate of FID to 3c per \$100 which has applied from 1 January 1985.

The further decrease in the rate of duty proposed in this Bill will benefit the whole of the community and will mean that the rate in Western Australia will be lower than the rate applying in any other State levying the duty.

The reduced rate of duty will apply from 1 January 1986 and the estimated cost to revenue of the reduction in rate will be \$3.5 million in 1985-86 and \$8.3 million in a full year.

In addition, the Bill makes provision for an exemption from FID for those local government associations comprised solely of municipalities. These associations work closely with local authorities and it would seem appropriate that they should also enjoy the benefits of exemption presently available to local authorities.

There is one other provision proposed in this Bill and this relates to the short-term dealings of certain financial institutions. Currently section 26(5) of the Act provides the Commissioner of State Taxation with a discretionary power to change the certification of a prescribed short-term dealer to a certified short-term dealer in certain circumstances. Prescribed short-term dealers may be financial institutions such as building societies, credit unions, and savings banks which operate mainly as investors in the market and pay duty at the rate of 0.004 per cent on the whole of their average monthly short-term investments. On the other hand, certified short-term dealers are market operators such as the official short-term dealers and merchant bankers, and because of the Australia-wide nature of their operations, they pay duty of 0.005 per cent on an average monthly basis on one-tenth of their Australia-wide short-term liabilities.

In the exercise of his discretion it was intended that the commissioner would only change the certification of prescribed dealers after taking into account the revenue and equity implications. However, a Supreme Court judgment on the commissioner's use of that discretion has ruled that the grounds of revenue and equity are not relevant to the exercise of his discretionary power. The maintaining of equity between classes of financial institutions is important because of the obvious competitive advantage to be gained by individual financial institutions within a class, should a change of status be granted resulting in the duty being assessed on only one-tenth of their Australia-wide liabilities.

In view of the judgment it is proposed to repeal section 26(5) of the Act and to include a new provision which would ensure that any financial institution which had its certification changed by reason of the existing provisions would revert to its appropriate category from the date of assent of the Bill. This will ensure equity between the various classes of financial institutions.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Hassell (Leader of the Opposition).

BILLS (8): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Road Traffic Amendment Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Carr (Minister for Police and Emergency Services), and read a first time.

2. Forrest Place and City Station Development Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Pearce (Minister for Planning), and read a first time.

3. Acts Amendment (Educational Institutions Superannuation) Bill.

Bill introduced, on motion by Mr Pearce (Minister for Education), and read a first time.

4. Western Australian Mint Bill.

5. Iron Ore (Cleveland-Cliffs) Agreement Amendment Bill.

6. Iron Ore (Dampier Mining Company Limited) Agreement Amendment Bill.

7. Alumina Refinery (Mitchell Plateau) Agreement Amendment Bill.

8. Western Mining Corporation Limited (Throssell Range) Agreement Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by Mr Parker (Minister for Minerals and Energy), and read a first time.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Precedence: Wednesdays

MR CARR (Geraldton—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) [2.37 p.m.]: On behalf of the Leader of the House I move—

That on and after Wednesday, 30 October 1985—

(a) Standing Order 225 (Grievances) be suspended, and

(b) Government business shall have precedence of all motions and orders of the day on Wednesdays as on other days.

This is a standard motion moved at this time of the session.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [2.38 p.m.]: It is an indication of the way in which the Government has dealt with the business of the House that it puts up this motion at this time without one argument

in justification. There was no-one ready to move the motion, it nearly lapsed, and the Government has not put forward any argument in support of the motion. The Minister who stepped in quickly to take the place of the Leader of the House simply moved the motion and did not speak to it.

The reality is that this motion is not necessary and is not desirable at this time of the session. It represents an attempt by the Government to escape debate in the normal course of events regarding private members' legislation and motions which are embarrassing to it. I refer in particular to two items of private members' business which are to be thwarted by the passage of this motion.

Let it be clearly understood what this motion seeks to do: It seeks to eliminate the rights of members to bring forward or debate private members' business in this House until all Government business has been dealt with and has been put out of the way. It seeks to eliminate the right of Opposition and Government members to bring forward and debate any business until after all the Government's business has been dealt with.

It is not necessary to bring forward this motion at this time. It is directed, at least in part, to eliminating the Government's being put on the spot over some private members' business which is embarrassing to it.

I refer to two items of private members' business and, in particular, to the private member's Bill introduced by the member for Moore relating to relief for mortgagors from the effect of mortgagees' sales.

Mr Brian Burke: The member for Moore had to complain to the Parliament to get the Bill brought on.

Mr HASSELL: That shows how wrong the Premier is. I refer the House to the question that the member for Moore raised in the Parliament on 10 October when he asked the Premier about relief from mortgagee sales. In part, he asked—

In view of the circumstances, will the Premier give urgent consideration to giving a high priority to bringing forward my private member's Bill which is designed to prevent this serious situation?

That was question 252. The Premier replied to the question and, being very smart about it, said—

It is a private member's matter and needs to be discussed with the Leader of the Opposition. We will slot it into private member's business according to the Leader of the Opposition's desires.

Since then that Bill has been brought on for debate twice in this House as private members' business. On both occasions it has been adjourned by the Government against the wishes of the Opposition. The Government has refused to vote on the private member's Bill.

The Government now seeks to pass a motion—and no doubt it will pass in view of the Government's numbers—which will eliminate the opportunity for the Opposition to have that Bill debated promptly.

Mr Tonkin: It will be debated; you know that.

Mr HASSELL: Then let us debate it tomorrow; let us have private members' business tomorrow. We have tried to get that Bill voted on because we want to see where Government members stand on the relief of rural hardship.

Mr Brian Burke: We have already said we oppose the Bill.

Mr HASSELL: Then I ask why the Government did not oppose it and throw it out. Why did the Government not vote on it? Why did it adjourn the Bill on two occasions against our wishes?

Mr Brian Burke: Why didn't you bring the Bill on when the member wanted it brought on?

Mr HASSELL: We brought on the member's Bill as soon as the appropriate period had elapsed between its introduction and private members' day in accordance with the usual procedures. I know that those procedures are not those followed by the Government, but they are the usual ones. These procedures indicate that there should be a reasonable period between the introduction of a Bill and its debate. I point out to the House that the second reading of that Bill took place on 25 September and the Bill was debated two weeks later. The Bill has been brought on twice and on both occasions it has been adjourned by the Government against the wishes of the Opposition. The result is that that Bill is now caught up in this unnecessary motion to get the House away altogether from private members' business.

The other motion which the Government is trying to avoid—

Mr Tonkin: We will not avoid them. They will all be dealt with.

Mr HASSELL: Yes, but when? Will they be dealt with tomorrow? Why has not notice of this motion been given in the normal way so that there can be another private members' day before its provisions come into effect? This motion is deliberately designed to eliminate private members' business tomorrow. There is no reason for that to occur at this stage of the session. There is no shortage of time. We are not running up to Christmas. We are only a short period into the session and the motion is designed simply to stifle the Opposition and to facilitate the Government's moves to get itself out of this House as quickly as it can.

The other Opposition motion of importance that the Government seeks to avoid is that on the subject of land rights, a motion that was put up by the Opposition to express opposition to national uniform land rights legislation. It was adjourned by the Government against the wishes of the Opposition without a vote being taken. There was no reason why a vote could not have been taken, but none was. The Government will now make sure that that motion does not come up for discussion and debate until way down the track; perhaps when the Government has finished all its business. It may be debated in a pressure cooker atmosphere created by this Government's wish to get out of the House quickly and to get members to sit all night so that matters such as these can be brought up at the last minute.

The Leader of the House has said over and over again in times gone by that there was no need for Parliament to have many late night sittings. I point out that during this session this Minister and this Government have deliberately created a pressure cooker situation in which legislation is not being dealt with adequately by this House. It is also resulting in a bottleneck of legislation in the upper House. Next week we will no doubt hear from the Government about how the upper House is deliberately delaying the Government's legislative programme. That is not the case at all. The upper House is trying to deal with the legislation and this Government, which is endlessly critical of the upper House, is driving it into a position of being the only place in which legislation is being dealt with properly. It is the only place where there is an opportunity for legislation to be thoroughly considered.

Mr Tonkin: We are giving you seven days on every Bill.

Mr HASSELL: I am glad the Minister has interjected. It is true that towards the end of the session, historically and generally, the period allowed for Bills to be considered has been shortened. That is true.

Mr Tonkin: You gave us one or two days for 19 Bills.

Mr HASSELL: It is true that the period has been shortened towards the end of sessions over the years by Governments of all political persuasions. We have never before had a situation in which this so-called seven-day rule has been applied from the very beginning of a session. I ask the House to consider seriously how the Opposition can deal properly with legislation when it has at its disposal, in respect of all the members of the Opposition in this House, one research officer, and yet the Government has introduced all these Bills with the seven-day rule to apply.

Mr Tonkin: How many did we have?

Mr HASSELL: I know the situation was no different before, but what was different in relation to those situations was that more time was allowed. In the past, during the course of the Address-in-Reply debate, legislation was introduced and left to lie on the table. Thus several weeks elapsed between its introduction and its debate. But this year the Government has done something entirely different. We have referred to it before, but it is appropriate to put it on record again. The Government suspended Standing Orders to give Government business priority over the Address-in-Reply with the result that from the very beginning of the session a succession of Government Bills were introduced on the basis that all of them would be open for debate seven days later.

A seven-day period is not long enough to put complex legislation before community interest groups which have a genuine interest in the legislation and to get feedback. The strata titles legislation, for example, should not have been politically contentious, but it was forced through this Parliament at such a pace that the result is unsatisfactory. Amendments are already called for. Many other pieces of equally important or more important legislation have been put through this Parliament without adequate time for consultation with and consideration by the people in the community who have a real and genuine interest. Much of this legislation will boomerang on the Government in the months ahead because people are now waking up. In the past week, two or three people have spoken to me about what they re-

gard as unsatisfactory legislation about which they knew nothing before it went through because they were either not given time to consider the legislation or they were not given the legislation at all.

The Opposition certainly cannot properly do its job in this place when it is expected to deal with complex legislation in a week. There is a stack of important legislation before the Parliament. Let the Premier not be heard to complain about the Legislative Council's not doing its job when the Premier and his Government are presently making damned sure that the Legislative Assembly cannot do its job.

If the Legislative Assembly had had the time to consider and work on legislation properly, and the Legislative Council was deliberately holding up that legislation, there would be room for complaint, but the Legislative Assembly has not been able to do a proper job on the legislative programme. We are not talking about the general situation which arises at the end of a session, when towards Christmas and the end of December, the Government and the Opposition have to get out of Parliament and by mutual consent the legislative programme is brought to an end with a series of very late night sittings and legislation is dealt with on short notice, often by consent and arrangement. That is the normal situation. This year we have not had that situation. We have had a pressure cooker situation and one in which literally there has been inadequate time for the work to be done on the legislation.

Mr Tonkin: We have had two requests today—

Mr HASSELL: I am not talking about the temporary adjournments and agreements relating to the management of the House. I am prepared to say to the Leader of the House that after a couple of blow-ups which we have had during this session, he has sought to be cooperative on a number of Bills. I am not talking about that. I am talking about a strategy which has been adopted from the beginning of this session, to put the Address-in-Reply aside and rush through the legislation in circumstances where consistently there has been a lack of adequate time to deal with it. Now, to make the situation worse, we are not even at the end of October—

Mr Tonkin: What is the date?

Mr HASSELL: The 29th.

Mr Tonkin: And that is not the end of October?

Mr HASSELL: It is not the end of October. There are two days to go.

Mr Tonkin: The 31st is the end of October, is it not?

Mr HASSELL: The Government is now eliminating private members' business from consideration which means there will be more pressure. I understand that the Government has introduced on to the Notice Paper no less than 13 Bills today. When is it expected that these Bills will be dealt with? Look at what is on the Notice Paper now in terms of importance? For instance, there is the Fire Brigades Superannuation Bill. How much time does the Government think that debate on that legislation will require? It involves considerations of revenue, the Fire Brigades Board funding system, and the liability of local government authorities? When will there be proper and due consideration given to those types of Bills?

It is all very well accepting that the Government has every intention of forcing the House to adjourn as quickly as it can, as it has demonstrated it wants to do over a period of time. We have before this House the Adoption of Children Amendment Bill which was introduced on 22 October, a very important Bill; the Acts Amendment (Meat Industry) Bill, another very important Bill which requires much consideration; and so on. There is a stack of such measures and yet, as we go into the first item of business to be dealt with today, the Camballin Farms (AIL Holdings Pty Ltd) Agreement Bill, we find it was introduced in the House only seven days ago. That does not give much time for preparation on an important Bill. How much time has the member handling the Bill had to make a real and adequate assessment by way of consultation with interested parties?

I said a few moments ago that if the Government had introduced the suspension of Standing Orders in a normal way at a normal time we would not have opposed it, just as we have not opposed it in the past. We would support it and seek the usual assurances about handling private members business; but as of now this motion is not necessary. It is not desirable and it is simply—

Mr Tonkin: We are following your precedent.

Mr HASSELL: The Government is not following our precedent. The Leader of the House is wrong in asserting that the Government is following the Opposition's precedent. The

Government may point to the dates upon which this motion has been introduced in the past—the Opposition is aware of those dates.

What the Opposition does not understand is that the Government has changed the whole character of this session of Parliament and created a pressure cooker situation in which this House of the Parliament has not had time, in relation to a great deal of legislation, to really do its homework properly. That is the simple situation the Government has created. It may not have set out to do that, but it has set out to get out of the Parliament as quickly as it can. The result of following that tactic in the way it has is that this House has not spent as much time on the legislation as it should have done, and it is causing a bottleneck in the Legislative Council. The Government, which criticises the Legislative Council, has contributed to the growth and importance of that body, and it has taken away from this House the very essential role it should have in dealing with legislation. It is a great pity it has done so because this House should be working in the proper way in relation to legislation, and it should not be put in the position of relying on the Legislative Council to pick up the pieces because the Government has run the shop in such a way that there is no opportunity for proper consideration of legislation, not only by us, but by the people outside Parliament who need to consider the legislation. Members should imagine what it is like when one goes to a voluntary organisation or business organisation the day after the legislation is brought in, because the Opposition has the responsibility to answer questions. In less than a week the organisations have to have committee or council meetings, and there are several bodies to consult. Over and over again the Government applies this one-week rule. If the Government was applying that one-week rule now for the first time, the Opposition would not be complaining, but it has been applying it right through the session and it has caused a completely new character and style of session which has done this Parliament no good. Apart from stopping the Opposition doing its job properly, this move will reflect and rebound on the Government.

MR BRIAN BURKE (Balga—Premier) [2.58 p.m.]: I think the Leader of the Opposition has sought to do two things: The first is to apologise in advance for the Legislative Council's embarking upon the obstruction or destruction of the Government's remaining legislative programme. That came through very clearly from

everything the Leader of the Opposition had to say; and the Government will be interested in the next three, four, or five weeks to see the way in which the Legislative Council approaches its business because I think it is clear that the Legislative Council, as predicted by the Leader of the Opposition's comments, wishes to be obstructive and destructive of the Government's legislative programme. That is the first thing.

The second point is that the Leader of the Opposition sought, although he did not recognise it as one of his objects, to excuse the very poor performance of the Opposition both in terms of private members' business and in terms of dealing with the business of the House proper. On 19 occasions in one year the Opposition, when it was in Government, gave us, when we were in Opposition, less than one week to deal with legislation. We have not done that. We have sought to give a minimum of one week to the Opposition for every piece of legislation that has been introduced; and on every occasion when a request by the Opposition has been made for deferral of a particular piece of legislation, that request has been accommodated.

What the Leader of the Opposition is doing, apart from addressing comments to the likely behaviour of the Legislative Council in the next few weeks, is excusing a desultory performance, an awful performance, by his own members in this Parliament. On how many occasions in respect of simple Bills have we seen members of the Opposition stand up and say they have not had the time that they need to look at a Bill properly. What they have been doing on many occasions has been attempting to excuse their own laziness. In Opposition, confronted with the 19 occasions on which we had less than a week, we did not excuse our own laziness.

We brought down the Government; partly because of our parliamentary performance and also partly because we did the work to produce the policies, we were able to put before the public an alternative Government which it chose to elect. We did not whinge, moan or complain. We did not knock and criticise, or say that the pairs were to be called off, then they were back on. We did not say we had not had enough time, that the Government was not treating us properly or that the Leader of the House had been nasty to us. We presented an alternative which was positively appealing to the public and which resulted in the eviction from office of a Government which now ac-

cuses us of being less mannerly but which provided 19 examples of legislation thrust into the Parliament with less than a week accorded to the Opposition to prepare to debate it.

Today the hypocrisy of the Leader of the Opposition is no better reflected than in his actions when he speaks about his private member's motion on land rights. Members should judge the character of the Leader of the Opposition for themselves. This is the motion which the Leader of the Opposition wants to bring to a vote and which he says the Government has tried desperately to avoid debating and voting upon. Do members know when the Leader of the Opposition gave notice of that motion? It was on 20 August. We have gone from 20 August, through September, and through to the end of October, and during that time the Leader of the Opposition chose not to bring the motion on for debate. He now complains that the Government is trying to prevent a vote on that motion, yet he allowed the period from 20 August to 9 October to elapse before he even moved the motion. From 20 August this man, who now says that we are rushing in a motion to deny debate about a motion he has moved, remained in his place, not moving that incredibly important motion until 9 October.

What matter was of such critical importance as to stand in the place of that motion? It was the issue at Mudginberri. It was so important, so critical, and so crucial as to require the attention of the Parliament and to allow the Leader of the Opposition on 29 October to whinge, moan, and complain in his insincerity that he is now being excluded from the private members' business of the Parliament.

I turn now to the Leader of the Opposition's other example. Let us consider the honesty of the situation put forward by the Leader of the Opposition. In order to have his Bill debated the member for Moore was forced to ask the Premier a question about the order of his Bill on the Notice Paper on private members' business day. It is not for the Government to order the private members' day Notice Paper, but the Leader of the Opposition had to have his conscience pricked by one of his own backbenchers. It should be remembered that the member for Moore is no longer a member of the National Party; he is a member of the Liberal Party. One of the Leader of the Opposition's backbenchers had to stand in the Parliament and ask the Government whether it would use its good offices to persuade the Leader of the Opposition to list that member's motion for debate.

The Leader of the Opposition now says that the Government is guilty of delay and of not bringing the matter to a vote; but the Leader of the Opposition would not even bring the matter to debate. He refused to allow the member for Moore to bring the matter on for debate. I make it perfectly clear—as speakers on this side of the House have already done, but the Leader of the Opposition does not appear to have understood what was said—that the Government opposes the member for Moore's Bill. We do not support it and two speakers on this side have stated the Government's position. We cannot be plainer than that. If the Leader of the Opposition wants confirmation in respect of his motion which was so important that notice was given of it in August and it was not brought on until October, let me lighten his darkness by saying that we do not support his motion either. That will clarify the situation. The Leader of the Opposition wants to make a political point and his talk of humbug and excuses, and his attacks on the Leader of the House today, in an effort to make a cheap political point about motions introduced when he was in Government, inevitably point to a situation in which our performance has been so much more generous than his that it cannot stand comparison.

Let us consider the truth of this issue: The Leader of the Opposition chose two pieces of private members' business as the standard to which he nails his flag. The first was not brought on for debate by the Opposition until the member for Moore, a backbencher in the Opposition, asked the Government to use its good offices to bring the matter on for debate. The Government has stated its opposition to that Bill and it will not change, but that does not detract from the fact that the Leader of the Opposition did not consider listing it for debate until after the member for Moore had asked the question.

The second point relating to private members' business the Government is said to be trying to avoid refers to the land rights motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, who is now zealous, enthusiastic, and ambitious for the passage of the motion. He allowed the motion to languish in obscurity for six weeks before bringing it on for debate, yet he now complains. Having been as delinquent as that himself he complains about a motion introduced by the Government which his party also introduced when it was in Government in this place. Neither of those two private members'

issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition stands the scrutiny of even the most myopic member.

Let us consider the general issue about the way in which the Opposition excuses its own laziness, and accuses the Government of doing something that is less than normal or usual. The motion is perfectly proper, normal, and usual and has been introduced by Governments of all political kinds. It does not deny private members' business but seeks to give Government business precedence over private members' business, as is usual, and it does so in a much more generous manner than did the Opposition when in Government. The Opposition's claims are mealy-mouthed and cynical when considered in the light of its performance over the years. This motion does not exclude private members' business or its consideration; it seeks to allow Government business to take precedence.

This session will probably terminate towards the end of November, which I understand is a fairly usual time for the end of a session. In the next three or four weeks we shall discharge the business of the House and then attend to private members' business that the Opposition has listed which it now, with a rush of blood to the head, wants to debate and vote upon, although previously it was not thought to be too urgent.

The other point I make refers to the Leader of the Opposition's comments about the number of Bills introduced today. I will refer to five of them because I introduced the Bills and am responsible for them. They are all Budget Bills and, unless the Opposition is of a mind to do something absolutely untoward, they will not meet with the Opposition's actual opposition.

One was the Bill to reduce the financial institutions duty; others were to reduce payroll tax and stamp duties; and another Bill dealt with payroll tax assessment procedures. The fifth of the 13 Bills is Stamp Amendment Bill (No. 2). They are all Budget Bills, all fairly straightforward, normal Bills, and entirely acceptable. But the Leader of the Opposition goes only to the quantity, not to the quality. One can discount the arguments of the Leader of the Opposition and reduce them to what they always are—one big whinge.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [3.11 p.m.]: The Premier's comments have shown him to be the ultimate hypocrite in this House. The first thing I want to ask him is whether he has any-

thing to fear from the Opposition? If our performance has been so bad, and if everything he has just said was true, what is the rush to get out of this place?

The Premier's memory in recent times has lapsed badly. Only this morning I met with the Leader of the House, as we normally do every Tuesday morning, to discuss the business of the Parliament, and the Leader of the House indicated to me that we would be out of this place inside three weeks. That is the Government's objective. That is what the Leader of the House spoke to me about. The Premier was apparently his informed source, yet he stands up today and again lies to the Parliament and says we will be here till the end of November.

You know and I know, Mr Speaker, that the Government is desperate to get out of this House. If it is not desperate to get out of this place, why are we debating this motion today?

Mr Hodge: You are wasting time.

Mr MacKINNON: May I outline some of the precedents set? The Leader of the House has not yet spoken but I will ask him to comment on these matters later.

Let us look at the record of the commencement of the spring session of Parliament for the past four years. In 1982 it was 3 August. In 1983 it was 23 July. In 1984 it was 25 July. In 1985 it was 15 August—two weeks later.

I have not looked at the dates the Parliament completed its business, but I guarantee that 14 November will be, if not the earliest we have finished our business in the Parliament for those four years, awfully close to it.

The first precedent set by the Government this year was that we sat two weeks later than normal, which obviously means that the business of the Parliament is compressed into a shorter time.

The second precedent—and this concerns the ability of private members to raise issues in the Parliament—relates to grievances. I have been a member of this Parliament now for nearly nine years. Other members have been here longer than that. But can members recall a session of Parliament where we have had grievances on one day only? That one day was last Wednesday. Now, of course, we will have no further grievances.

May I ask the member for Welshpool, who has been here longer than any other member, if he can recall any previous session of the Parliament where grievances have been raised once only?

Mr Jamieson: Yes, easily. They have only been in vogue for a few years; we did not have them before.

Mr MacKINNON: That was an easy one. Since they have been in place, never have we had a session where grievances have been raised once only. That is the second precedent conveniently overlooked by the Premier in talking about this matter.

The third precedent concerns the Address-in-Reply debate. Never in the history of this Parliament has the Address-in-Reply debate been pushed aside and Government business given priority. Again the interests of private members have been discarded in favour of Government business. The Address-in-Reply was always brought on by the Government in an effort to encourage complaints, not to discourage them. On this occasion members were not encouraged to take up matters in which they had an interest.

The fourth precedent—and I think probably the worst—was the performance of the Premier in responding to the Budget last week. I agree totally with the Leader of the Opposition in his response at that time. It was nothing short of disgraceful. Members on this side of the Parliament and members on the Government side have the opportunity in the Budget debate to raise matters of importance to their electorates and issues of importance to the State. I have been a member of the House under previous Premiers, and in particular Sir Charles Court, who assiduously took notes and made sure that he addressed each of the issues raised, as a Treasurer should.

What did this Treasurer do? He got up and frivolously listed the performances of each of the Ministers, because he had nothing better to talk about, and tried to indicate what a wonderful job they had done. That was absolutely disgraceful. The Treasurer has treated this Parliament with absolute disdain.

Members on this side of the Parliament are interested in the Budget debate. They are interested in the Government's response on those issues they have raised. We intend to raise those matters again during the Committee debate in the hope that we will get some sort of reasoned response.

Those are the precedents which have been set by this Government. Those precedents have led, as the Leader of the Opposition indicated, to this Parliament's being treated with scant respect by the Government. That is why we are opposed to this motion. It is not, as the Leader

of the House has indicated, because of the timing, but the manner in which the Government has debated issues and set precedents.

Let me touch on a couple of matters raised by the Premier. We do not apologise for what happens in the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council acts as it should—as a proper House of Review, taking time to look at legislation as it comes forward.

I have been reminded of a fifth precedent raised recently by the member for Gascoyne. On how many previous occasions have we sat for such long hours? In other words, when have we sat for such extensive hours so early in a session of the Parliament? I cannot recall that happening before.

Members should look at the time available for discussion. We have to compress the Bills to be debated into a much shorter time-frame. With only a week's notice, there is so much less time for discussion, and there are so many more matters to discuss because we sit for so long.

To get back to what I was speaking about before, the Premier indicates that we are apologising about the Legislative Council's actions. That is certainly not what we intend to do. The Legislative Council has its own work based on its Standing Orders and the way members wish to deal with the matters before them.

To come back to where I began, if the Premier and the Government have any concern about this motion, if they believe the Opposition's performance has been inept, as the Premier wants to say, why does he want to get out of the Parliament so quickly? The Leader of the Opposition has indicated already that ever since we have been in this Parliament this part of the session, the Government has been acting with undue haste trying to get out of the place as quickly as possible. Clearly the Government does not want to sit in the Parliament any longer than necessary. The Government knows it is coming under increasing pressure day by day; it knows its performance in this Parliament is the one which is being called inept, and the longer it sits here the less chance it has of retaining any semblance of respectable numbers after the next election.

We oppose the motion.

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [3.19 p.m.]: I apologise for not moving this motion which stood in my name. I thank the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for stepping into the breach.

The reason I was out of the Chamber is that I had a phone call from my daughter and I knew I would not be able to catch her later, and although I knew the motion was about to come on I took a punt that I would be able to speak to her before it came on. In any case, I do not think great damage has been done to the institution of Parliament as a result. I was happy to speak immediately after the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, but the Leader of the Opposition chose to jump up and scream about the Opposition's not having been given any reasons for the motion.

The seven days referred to is a minimum. Only today the member for Darling Range came to me and said that the Opposition was not ready to go on with the Adoption of Children Bill, and I agreed to an adjournment. The seven days provision was a request by the Opposition. I do not remember when we were in Opposition having our requests of that nature acceded to. As the Premier said, in the last year of the conservative Government we had 19 Bills for which less than seven days' adjournment was given, and for some the adjournment was for only one or two days. Further, they were not all towards the end of the session; some were in August. So, the seven days' provision is a minimum; lots of Bills have been adjourned for two or three weeks to assist the Opposition. The Adoption of Children Bill is one which I have already mentioned. The Local Government Bill was one which the member for Karrinyup wanted more time to consider, and his request for more time was agreed to by me. The Bills associated with the intellectually handicapped have also been adjourned for some time because the member for Kalamunda indicated that he needed more time, so time was given. So I do not believe the Opposition has any real reason to complain.

I do not want to go over the ground already covered by the Premier; that is, the matter of private members' business that was given notice of by the Opposition. These matters have been of so much importance that the Opposition did not even get around to moving the motion on land rights for a fraction in excess of six weeks, which is an indication of how important the Opposition saw that motion.

The Leader of the Opposition knows that when this motion is introduced each year, I have given an assurance that private members' business would be dealt with. This year private members' business will be dealt with in much the same way as it has been dealt with in the past. I remember that in one of the last years of

the conservative Government's reign, we were given four hours to deal with the remaining private members' business on the Notice Paper. I think a motion came on at 1.00 a.m. and finished at 5.30 a.m. That is the way this Parliament has traditionally dealt with private members' business. I assure the Opposition, and I give this undertaking, that we will deal with private members' business.

The conservatives are complaining that we have been setting precedents. The whole idea of having elections is for people to have a choice. Perhaps members opposite would rather live in a one-party State where no precedents are ever set because there is only one party and nothing changes. Of course things change.

I will tell members opposite of another precedent we want to set in readiness for next year; it is to be a precedent in the way this Parliament is run: We will have an autumn session. That has never been done before in an election year. In fact, there were no autumn sessions until 1968, but we are going to have an autumn session next year.

Mr Peter Jones: There was one in 1952.

Mr TONKIN: There might have been the odd one, but there were no regular autumn sessions until 1968. I think I am right in saying that the autumn session in the election year next year will be a first. When I say that, I do not include any one or two-day sessions that may have been held.

Mr Blaikie: I hope you are not preparing for another special sitting, because you won't have an opportunity of being in Government next year.

Mr TONKIN: I am saying, as are most Western Australians, that we will be returned to Government next year and that members opposite will still be sitting on that side of the House. So our intention to have an autumn session next year is another precedent. No doubt members opposite will get up and carry on about tradition and so on, claiming that we are breaking with tradition again. We make no apology for running things differently from members opposite. One of the reasons the people chose us was that they wanted certain things to alter. One thing they wanted to see was less confrontation between the Government and the Opposition. The people desired to have a Government that listened to the Opposition so that if an Opposition amendment had some merit, the Government would be pre-

pared to accept it. We are pleased we are a different sort of Government from members opposite in this way.

The Opposition has claimed it is always rushed, and as the Premier has said, one of the problems with the Opposition is that it has too many part-time members, too many members running their business interests and looking at being a member of Parliament as a kind of spare-time job, as aristocrats did back in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Members opposite say they do not want to sit on Thursday nights because they are rushed. We make no apology for the hours we sit. Members opposite should go out and speak with the public and complain about politicians being over-worked by this Government and just see how much sympathy they get on that score.

This motion is quite fair and it is the normal motion moved around this time of the year. We expect the session to end some time in November. In 1977, a year when we had a conservative Government, the session ended on 15 November. We will make no apology for finishing on 15 November or shortly thereafter.

A big difference between this and other Governments is that this Government does not have the numbers in the Legislative Council. When we have a conservative Government, the Legislative Council goes to sleep, as it did for the nine years of the previous conservative Government. The Government of members opposite never had to come back to the Assembly to deal with messages from the Legislative Council. The Government knew before the legislation was introduced that it would be given the nod, that its legislation would be passed, whatever Bills the Premier wanted at the time. We are not in that position. We have a Legislative Council which suddenly wants a committee system, and which suddenly wants to become active and to scrutinise legislation. So be it. If necessary, even after the Assembly has finished its business, we may well have to come back to deal with matters dealt with by the Legislative Council.

When members opposite are berating us, they should remember that we do not have their luxury of having an upper House permanently onside; when we are in Government we do not have an upper House, as members opposite do, which does not reject a single Bill or send back messages with amendments. We do not have that luxury, and that makes the management of this House much more difficult. But we are not complaining. It is a fact of life.

We are prepared, manfully and womanfully, to face up to our duties and to see to it that we do our job.

The Premier spoke a great truth when he said that members opposite were lazy. When they were in Government they had it easy. Members opposite were in Government for a long time and their Ministers had behind them a coterie of civil servants and advisers of various kinds. The job was much easier. As the Leader of the Opposition says, in Opposition members opposite have only one research officer. How many research assistants does the Opposition think we had? We went through nine years being given, in many cases, only one or two days in which to prepare to debate a Bill. The member for Victoria Park, the present Minister for Conservation and Land Management, had an experience when, as Leader of the Opposition, a Bill was thrust into his hands and he was told not to sit down but to keep going and debate the Bill. And members opposite talk about a lack of courtesy given to this Opposition! We have not done that to the Opposition, and we do not intend to. Although members opposite might deserve it, the people of WA deserve to see a better consideration of legislation.

We are not playing tit for tat. We are not going to sink to the level of conservative Governments, where not one of our amendments was accepted in nine years. I do not recall Sir Charles Court accepting an amendment in eight years. He felt that all wisdom resided with him and that he would lose face if he accepted an amendment. Thank God we are different. We are prepared to admit that we do make mistakes and that not all wisdom resides on this side of the House. We make no apology for that. We will continue to consider the Opposition and we will give its members time to deal with private members' business.

This is a traditional motion. It is true that we have not always been traditional, but that is because we are a different Government. That is why we have elections—to change Governments. That is why we will hold an autumn session in the election year of 1986. But with this motion we are being very traditional in introducing it towards the end of the session. I do not think the Premier has ever said a truer word than that the precedent set by the members opposite is not necessarily reasonable and wise. What the people want to know is: What is happening to the State; what about the policies for the State? They are not concerned about the childish squabbles that go on in this House.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [3.30 p.m.]: This motion is not really about the management of the House but about the credibility of the Premier because it has been shown in recent days that the Premier is under threat. He has very quickly developed a glass jaw.

The **SPEAKER**: Order! This motion moved by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is as follows—

That on and after Wednesday, 30 October 1985—

- (a) Standing Order 225 (Grievances) be suspended, and
- (b) Government business shall have precedence of all motions and orders of the day on Wednesdays as on other days.

I would like the member for Gascoyne to address his remarks to the motion.

Mr LAURANCE: I was alluding to the fact that the motion was obviously designed to bring the Parliament to a very swift conclusion, and there can be only one reason for that—the Premier's recently developed glass jaw. Members have only to look at the cartoons in tonight's *Daily News* to see that for every day this situation continues more and more questions about the Premier's credibility are asked—

The **SPEAKER**: Order! I ask the member to address the motion before the Chair.

Mr LAURANCE: Right, Mr Speaker. I was attempting to say that the basis for the motion really is the timing of the conclusion of the session, the quicker the better, obviously. Far from being the Government's greatest asset, the Premier has become the Government's greatest liability.

The **SPEAKER**: Order!

Mr LAURANCE: The points have been well made. I want to particularly take up the point of grievances. I was fortunate enough to have participated in the grievance debate last Wednesday, but little did I know that none of my colleagues would be afforded that opportunity in the weeks that would follow. I was hoping to be able to exercise that right again.

Grievances are a most important part of the whole parliamentary debating system. Members have a right to raise matters in the very brief period permitted. They also have the right to obtain an immediate reply from the Minister responsible. Grievances play a very important role in the whole running of the Parliament. It is despicable that a grievance debate was

brought on purely for one private members' day and then abolished, so no-one else has the opportunity to air a grievance during this session. It shows the lack of courtesy the Government has shown to the Opposition in the running of the Parliament throughout this session.

Mr Tonkin: You talk about discourtesy. I do not know a more discourteous person than you.

Mr LAURANCE: I will talk more about courtesy. The first part of the session of Parliament this year was bad enough, but that was nothing compared to what happened this session.

Mr Tonkin: I am going for a cup of tea.

Mr Blaikie: Very discourteous.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes, it is. That brings me to the point of the time allowed before debate is resumed after a Minister's second reading speech. The Leader of the House knows that there has been very little cooperation between Ministers handling Bills and spokesmen on this side of the House. That is not the way it has been done in the past. Regardless of what the Premier and the Leader of the House have said about the way in which business has been handled, the period between the introduction of a Bill and the resumption of the debate depends a great deal on the responsible Minister.

To give members an example, some Ministers, unlike the Leader of the House, do extend courtesy to the Opposition. One such Minister is the Minister for Lands and Surveys. We received a communication from him last week indicating that legislation relating to the Camballin Farms and the Fitzroy River would be introduced, for very good reason. The Government requested that that matter be dealt with expeditiously. The Minister indicated that he wanted the Bill dealt with in one day. We said that that period was insufficient and we sought an extension of time. We did not even seek a period of seven days, but the Minister decided in that instance we would have seven days.

Also, the Minister gave a copy of his second reading speech to the Leader of the Opposition four or five days prior to its being delivered in the House with a personal handwritten note to the Leader of the Opposition requesting that the matter be handled expeditiously, and for good reason. The Opposition was prepared to go along with that, even though we had not even seen the Bill. We used the second reading speech notes the Minister had given us. We asked for an extension of time so the Bill was

not dealt with in one day, but if the Government had insisted, we would have dealt with it in that one day because we had had some prior notice of the legislation, purely because of the courtesy of the Minister for Lands and Surveys.

Contrast that with what has happened where the seven-day period rule has been invoked and we have been jumping from one matter to another on the Notice Paper, without the courtesy of the Government seeking our cooperation about which matter would be dealt with next. That is the difference. Some matters can possibly be dealt with in a shorter period than seven days if the Government is prepared to communicate and cooperate with people on this side of the House who are handling the Bills.

Let us consider the Acts Amendment and Repeal (Transport Co-ordination) Bill that was the subject of some heated debate in this Parliament a few weeks ago. At the second reading stage we indicated to the Minister that we had not been given sufficient time because of a particular set of circumstances, far removed from the suggestion that the Opposition was being lazy, but because the Opposition spokesman was involved with a Select Committee and, along with Government members, was out of the State on Government business. That was the laziness that the Premier talks about! This Opposition is far more involved in committee work and Government business than were previous Oppositions. That is why additional time was needed. The Opposition is very enthusiastic and conscientious.

On the one hand the Government told us about this wonderful word "consensus". The Government said, "We will consult with all these industry groups." What have we found? It is the Opposition which shows legislation to the various groups concerned, groups which had often never even heard about a measure, let alone been consulted on it. The Opposition is doing the Government's tasks. The highfalutin words, "We are not going to legislate without going out and speaking to the affected people first" have not been put into effect. It is the same thing as the Premier making his holier-than-thou statement about free gifts and then forgetting all about the statement and rushing out to enjoy free trips.

The Government said, "We will consult with industry groups before we introduce Bills to the Parliament." Of course that has not happened and it is not happening. The Opposition has had to assume that responsibility and go to various groups in the community and ask,

"Have you seen this Bill?" The usual answer is, "No, we have never even heard of it. The Government has not done us the courtesy of consulting with us." We say that we need to meet with such groups and the groups say that they need two or three days to get all their members together, and that of course gobbles up the seven days the Government has allowed us.

It has been very difficult to do the work of both the Government and the Opposition in regard to legislation which comes before us. Take the situation which occurred today—13 Bills were introduced! That means the Opposition spokesmen—and in many cases one shadow Minister is involved with more than one Bill—will have to approach 13 industry groups.

The Minister has had months and months in which to prepare the legislation with his advisers. The Leader of the House says that advisers are aplenty on the Government side. The advisers support and advise the Government. Ministers cannot even blow their noses without seeking the permission of an adviser first, yet the Opposition gets seven days to contact all the people involved. None of those people will have any advance knowledge of those 13 Bills which were brought forward today, yet the Government cannot make a move without its advisers. What are the advisers doing? If the Government does not have time to go out to consult with industry groups, why cannot the advisers do so? Surely they could do it for the Government. Seven days is at least better than nothing. That is what is happening—we have a huge job to do in seven days.

No previous Opposition has been asked to go through all that rigmarole of getting industry groups together, and obtaining an adequate response on the legislation which will come before the House. It is not easy. It is made more difficult when we finally get back here and find that the Minister responsible hides behind the Leader of the House and for some reason—I do not know why—he is not allowed to extend any courtesy to the members handling Bills on this side of the House.

Take the case of the Minister for Transport. He was involved with a few Bills some time ago. We indicated that there was some difficulty about getting all the details because our shadow spokesman was away in the Eastern States on Government business at the time and industry was not ready to have a meeting with him before the legislation came up. I raised that matter in the House. It brought a tirade of

abuse from the Government when I could only see that all of those reasons for delay were legitimate. The following day we moved onto the third reading stage of the Bill. I have said this before; the Minister was not here and never at any stage did he let us know that he would not be here. He did not say, "Do you mind if we do not proceed with the third reading today, even though it is on the Notice Paper?" or, "Do you mind, for instance, if the Leader of the House moves the third reading on my behalf and in your absence?"

He never said that; he was not there. I got up and said, "If I make some comments on the third reading stage who will respond?" No-one seemed to know. They could not find the Minister. Fancy moving on quickly with Bills in that way when one does not know who will respond or where the Minister is who is handling the Bill. No one has come and said to me, "Do you mind if we do this and that?" It is common courtesy.

Mr Grill: Get your facts straight.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister was not here.

Mr Grill: That is not telling the truth. The matter was brought on and without suggesting to me you had not had time to prepare you launched an attack on the Leader of the House. I said to you by way of interjection, "If you want more time you should approach me and I am sure we can arrange for you to have more time." You decided you wanted to plough on, which you did. That was up to you. You admitted freely at the time you were not prepared on the matter, but once the necessary meeting had taken place with your shadow spokesman on transport the substantive facts could be debated in another place.

Mr LAURANCE: Everything the Minister has said to date is absolutely true but he has forgotten to mention that the Leader of the House had already made a great song and dance about the fact that two Bills had been put off. One was a local government Bill which had to be put off on a number of occasions to suit the Minister.

Mr Carr: That is not true.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes it was.

Mr Carr: We agreed to your spokesman's request that it be put off for an extra week.

Mr LAURANCE: Big deal! There was a lot in the Bill as the Minister would know. There were times when we were prepared to debate it and the Minister was not here. This is a two-way thing. All the things the Minister for

Transport said a few moments ago were correct, but he forgot to mention that the Leader of the House said the Government had given the Opposition leave to defer two Bills on the understanding that everything else would be discussed at any moment—at the drop of a hat—and that the Government would go up and down the Notice Paper. The Minister forgot to mention that, and the Leader of the House said it on the same day.

I said our principal spokesman was in the upper House, and I was prepared to proceed on that day and not invoke further wrath from this man who is supposed to be a rational human being and runs the House. I was prepared to go on rather than have a third Bill deferred. The Minister left that part out; everything else he said was fact. I was referring to the following day. Where was the Minister when the third reading stage came up for debate? The Minister did not move the third reading; he was not here; he had not said he was going to be away. The Leader of the House had not come and said, "Look, the Minister is away, do you mind if we proceed?" There was absolutely no consultation or cooperation. That is where the Government is not giving us enough time.

Mr Grill: You had indicated the day before that you were not prepared, and you had nothing substantive to say.

Mr LAURANCE: Where was the Minister?

Mr Grill: It does not matter where I was.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister does not want to be embarrassed by having to tell us.

Mr Grill: You told us the day before you were not fully prepared on the Bill.

Mr LAURANCE: I also mentioned to the Minister when we were dealing with the second reading stage on Tuesday that there would be a meeting on Wednesday with the industry. The Minister brought up the third reading on the Wednesday afternoon after the meeting had taken place. Blind Freddy would know there was likely to be something coming out of that meeting that would be raised at the third reading stage.

Mr Grill: Even then you had nothing substantive to say.

Mr LAURANCE: How would the Minister know? He was not here.

Mr Grill: I can read. I read *Hansard*.

Mr LAURANCE: No-one could find the Minister.

Mr Grill: You had nothing substantive to say the next day either. There was nothing to answer.

Mr LAURANCE: If ever I wanted a better example of the lack of courtesy extended to the Opposition it is in the debate of the last few minutes. The Minister cannot even apologise for the fact that he was not here when he should have been and on-one could find him.

Mr Tonkin: You will get the courtesy you give.

Mr LAURANCE: That is an interesting point because I indicated earlier that I have been extended tremendous courtesy by the Minister for Lands and Surveys, and he would have had cooperation in proceeding with the Bill which he said had to be expedited. He came to the Opposition spokesman; he did not leave it to the Leader of the House to foul things up. I mentioned a couple of times earlier that when I was a Minister I had to deal with people like the present Minister for Agriculture and the Minister for Lands and Surveys, and there was never an argument about when we would proceed with a Bill, how far we would go, and whether we would go to the third reading stage. I extended to them the courtesy I would have expected from them when they were in Government. Those two Ministers have done that, but very few others do so. Neither of those two Ministers—and one of them is here today—has ever refuted that fact about the way we dealt with Bills. This Minister does not do that. He says, "We have told you seven days", and that is it. He says, "We will nominate the Bills and jump up and down the Notice Paper." He does not leave any room for the Minister handling the Bill to go and speak to his opposite number. That is the lack of courtesy that has been extended to the Opposition.

The Leader of the House is ramrodding the Parliament to an early conclusion. He wants to start late and finish early, and the House is sitting longer hours all the time. I want to deal with that last point. I have raised this matter before. By agreement between both sides of this Parliament some years ago we sat on Thursday morning. The clear understanding of both sides of Parliament was that that would negate the need to sit on Thursday evening. That was the reason it was done, and in fact the Legislative Council by agreement has just done exactly the same thing. It has decided to sit earlier on Wednesday so as not to sit on Thursday even-

ing. That is how that arrangement started in this House. We did not sit on Thursday evening except at the very end of the session.

The Government introduced this system some time ago before the Budget was introduced and one would normally not expect it until the second half of the session. That makes it extremely difficult for members who have country and remote electorates. That is a point which has been raised here before; no courtesy was shown to those people who have to represent the case of their electors while they are in Perth during the week for the Parliament. It makes it difficult for members to go back to their country electorates on a Thursday evening as they would normally do, apart from the last week or the last couple of weeks of the session. I also indicated on the first occasion we sat on a Thursday evening that it is difficult for those who have to head to the north of the State, usually early on Friday morning.

Throughout the history of the Parliament the sessions have been designed around the need for members to return from their electorates at the beginning of the week and go to their electorates at the end of the week. That just is not being done because this Government has decided to telescope the sittings of the Parliament into a very brief period, give no courtesy to the Opposition, and bring on these motions. Sure, they are traditional motions, but they are appearing much earlier in the session when it has hardly got going. The Thursday night business was brought in before the Budget had been introduced. That has never been done before. Sure, this motion comes forward every session, but not at this particular time.

The Government is giving no consideration to the programme of work of members of Parliament. It obviously has no understanding of the requirements of a country member of Parliament. That is quite obvious. If members want to go on about being lazy I point out that I had to open a school on behalf of a Minister. His name was on the plaque, not mine. He could not get there. Everybody scrubbed the place from top to bottom to be ready for the Minister's visit, and he did not front. He knows how difficult it is to get to the country because he could not even get there. Other members have to sit here late at night, on Thursday night, and once again this week I have to get up at 4.00 a.m.—

Mr Carr: You have had it explained to you that the charter plane did not turn up.

Mr LAURANCE: The Minister was not there. When members opposite talk about lazy members and members not going to their electorates they should think about their own Ministers first because they let a lot of people down when they do not turn up. The Minister lives only 10 minutes from Parliament House, but when he goes on a rare trip to the country he cannot even make it. A person who goes to his electorate every weekend as I do, and as I did this weekend when I got up at 4.00 a.m. is being asked to sit late tonight, late tomorrow, and late on Thursday night. A country member has to get up at 4.00 a.m. to go to his electorate, but the Leader of the House does not understand what representing a country electorate is all about.

That is the Government's trouble. It shows no courtesy or cooperation to the Opposition. It is despicable, as I said to a person whom I have described as unhinged—and I stick to that statement, because he has no idea of how to deal in a moderate way with people on this side of the House. He is a disgrace and should be removed.

MR THOMPSON (Kalamunda) [3.51 p.m.]: I would like to say one or two things while this matter is before the Chair. As I reflect back over the time I have been in this place, it seems to me that I have been here only five minutes, so quickly has time passed. I have contemplated the changes that have occurred in those almost 15 years, and I can say without any fear of contradiction that the changes that have taken place in the last 2½ to three years in this Parliament have been out of all proportion to the changes that occurred in the period prior to that time.

There have been some significant changes and I suggest to the present Government that it will live to rue the day that it instituted as many changes as it has. We all get our term in Government and we all get our term in Opposition, and as sure as night follows day members of the Government will find themselves back on this side of the House sooner or later—and I predict sooner—and the rules that the Government leaves behind it when it leaves office will be the ones that we on this side will start off with. Consequently I believe that it is very inappropriate to make hasty changes in this place because those changes will eventually impact on us all.

A significant number of changes have been introduced during this session of Parliament which have seriously diminished the

opportunities of private members of Parliament to adequately represent their constituents. One change has been to downgrade the Address-in-Reply debate and to compress it into other areas. Such has been the impact of this that one of the very valuable reforms that was fought for by Government members when in Opposition has been effectively reduced. I refer to the grievance debate. The Government, when in Opposition, fought for the grievance debate but it has effectively killed off the grievance debate by allowing only one such debate in this session.

I believe that it is rather strange that a party which fought so strenuously to have the grievance debate introduced is now, as the party in Government, actually killing off the grievance debate. The grievance debate was introduced to provide a means by which members of Parliament could raise issues which were not necessarily of earth-shattering importance but were of some importance to an individual's electorate, or alternatively, of some concern to the member with respect to some weighty issue. Since its introduction the grievance debate has been of great benefit, and is available to be used not only by members of the Opposition but also by members of the Government. If we have a look at what is happening in this particular instance, we find that the grievance debate occurred on only one day, which was last Wednesday. That will be the basis on which the next Parliament will start and members opposite will find that ultimately the grievance debate will disappear.

Changes need to be made from time to time in an institution such as a Parliament. One worthwhile change occurred during the time I was the Speaker and although I cannot claim credit for that change, I certainly did support the proposal. It was proposed that the need for Ministers of the Crown to read the answers to all of the questions on notice be eliminated. Members who were in the House prior to the introduction of that change will recall that it took something like an hour or more for the Ministers to go through their replies to questions on notice. There are a lot more questions on notice now than there were then and if that change had not been implemented, a lot more time of this Parliament would now be taken up with questions on notice.

In line with the change to eliminate the need for Ministers to read their answers to questions on notice, the Chair made the decision to expand the period of time available for questions without notice.

Mr Tonkin: You used to stop them all the time.

Mr THOMPSON: I did not. I stopped them periodically when things became a shambles.

Mr Tonkin: The present Speaker has been kinder to us.

Mr THOMPSON: I do not know whether he has been kinder to us. He has certainly not stopped question time as frequently as I did but he has quite often warned us that he would. The Speaker is like the man who tells us about the chess play, in which the threat is greater than the deed. By the Speaker's own reckoning, he is using that device as frequently as I did.

Mr Tonkin: He is very tolerant.

Mr THOMPSON: He is a lot more tolerant than I would be in terms of the noise that occurs during question time. I believe that questions without notice ought to be the most important part of the parliamentary day.

I am sure that members of Parliament in this State have often listened to the broadcast of the proceedings in the House of Representatives and have heard the question time of that place. I wonder how many dorothy dixers—

The SPEAKER: We are not debating question time.

Mr THOMPSON: All right. However, I am talking about the changes that have occurred as a result of the action taken by the present Government. The move that has been taken today is in line with a number of other changes that the Government has taken which seriously reduce the opportunities for members of the Opposition in particular, but members generally to use this very valuable forum. I believe it is quite hypocritical of the Government to do what it is now doing. I can recall the speeches made by the Leader of the House when he was on this side of the Chamber—

Mr Tonkin: I would have thought you would want to forget them.

Mr THOMPSON: No, because I had a lot of sympathy for the arguments that the Leader of the House put forward then. I believe the Leader of the House to be a person who has great respect for this institution and for the rights of members to express their points of view in this place. However, the Leader of the House, having made great speeches about how Parliament should be freed up and how it should deal with this, that, or the other, is now leading the fight to reduce and restrict the opportunities available to members of the Opposition. As I said earlier, the Government will

live to rue the day because when it comes back into Opposition, the ground rules will be very different from those that prevailed when they left this side of the House last time.

The rules that will apply when the Government comes back into Opposition will be the basis on which the new Government will start, and I believe that it is inappropriate for the present Government to use its numbers in this crude way which has impacted so devastatingly on this institution. I know it is traditional that towards the end of the session this type of motion is moved, but I point out that this Parliament did not start until three weeks later than normal. It has been traditional for the Parliament to conclude about the middle of November, but only on the basis of the late start in the last week of July. However, this Parliament did not start until the middle of August; three weeks have been lopped off the earlier part of the session. It would appear as though the session will finish a week before what one would expect to be the normal time of finishing.

We have reduced, by four sitting weeks, the time available for this Parliament to operate when it has an increased workload. Parliament used to meet only between July and November. Under pressure from the Opposition, the Brand Government decided to introduce autumn sessions of Parliament a few years ago. That came about because of the increased workload and responsibilities of members of Parliament. Parliamentary sittings times, rather than contracting as they are under this Government, should be expanding to meet the increased workload in legislation and the increase in responsibilities that members of Parliament have to their electorates. I submit to the Government that it is inappropriate to cut private members' business at this time.

The SPEAKER: I remind members of the House that if the debate becomes too repetitive I will have to take action under the Standing Orders.

MR CASH (Mt Lawley) [4.01 p.m.]: I oppose the motion moved on behalf of the Leader of the House which seeks to suspend time for grievances and to allow Government business to have precedence over all motions and Orders of the Day from tomorrow. In opposing the motion I draw the House's attention to my understanding of what Parliament is about. When I was elected to this place late last year I

understood that I would be able to speak my mind in this place on behalf of the people whom I represent.

Mr Tonkin: It is your fault if you do not.

Mr CASH: That is the very reason that we are discussing the motion, because that is what I want to do. The Government is refusing the backbench the opportunity to put their cases for their electorates. I might not have been here long but I have been here long enough to see the way this Government is prepared to run the business of this House.

Headlines in local newspapers indicate that the Government is suffering from severe setbacks. I believe it has introduced this motion to deny the Opposition the opportunity to raise matters which are of public importance. The Opposition is entitled to seek explanations from the Government for the way it is running the business of this House. The Government is placing obstacles in the way of the Opposition so that it cannot probe into various actions of the Government in recent times.

It is clear that private members' business, in recent weeks, has allowed the Opposition to raise matters of importance to the State and to the nation. Members will recall that recently the member for Vasse raised a very important matter relating to Exim Ltd moving into the north-west and purchasing the Emanuel leases and the fact that the Government proposes to spend \$20 million of taxpayers' money on restructuring those and other northern leases. I see that as a matter of very real importance which should have been brought before this House. There was no way that it would ever have been raised by the Government. The fact that the Opposition, in debating private members' business, raised the matter is evidence of the very real need for that business to continue to be debated.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member has to debate the motion before the Chair. He cannot refer to extraneous matters.

Mr CASH: Mr Speaker, I am endeavouring to point out that private members' business, in recent weeks, has been of great benefit to this House. I am indicating that the time for private members' business is to be curtailed by this Government. I see that as an attempt to gag the Opposition from raising matters of public importance.

On today's Notice Paper are a number of matters of public importance which the Opposition wishes to raise and to question the Government about. One of those matters is a

motion to be moved by the member for Stirling relating to the Mudginberri dispute. If this motion is passed the Opposition will have no opportunity to debate that matter. Another matter relating to the industrial relations system to be moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will be denied to us for debate. That is also a very important issue.

The Leader of the House has gone to great lengths to try to explain that he is attempting to move for the suspension of Standing Orders as they affect grievances. He is attempting to suspend the grievance debate to give Government business priority. We have heard it all before from the Leader of the House. He wants out of this House as soon as he can. As soon as the business that he wants completed is complete, he will get out of this House without giving the Opposition the opportunity to speak about the matters it considers are very important and which are listed on the Notice Paper.

The Government has a massive credibility gap. The Leader of the House is preventing the Opposition from raising matters which it is entitled to raise. I challenge the Leader of the House to tell me how he believes that I can represent the views of the people of my electorate if this motion is passed.

Mr Tonkin: In the Budget debate.

Mr CASH: Is that the way he thinks it will be done? Not everything I want to raise will be pertinent to the Budget.

Mr Tonkin: Everything that comes before this Government is in the Budget.

Mr CASH: Mr Speaker, you can see, by the interjections of the Leader of the House that he is a desperate man. The Government is on the run. It wants out as soon as possible. That is the reason for this motion being moved.

I place on record that I oppose the motion. As the member for Kalamunda suggested, I will also be in this place when the Government becomes the Opposition. I will look forward to ramming down its throat the very arguments that it has put forward today on this motion. Every dog has its day. Whether the Leader of the House is a member of this House when the Government goes into Opposition is debatable. If he is, however, I assure him that the same rules will be applied. He is doing a great disservice to the members of his backbench.

I oppose the motion.

The SPEAKER: Order! I wish to get serious with members. I refer members to Standing Order No. 142. We could have the situation

where every member in this Parliament could debate this motion. However, every member would be contravening Standing Orders. The motion is very limited and the arguments have been presented. Unless I hear something new that has not been presented I will have to take action in accordance with the Standing Orders.

MR BLAIKIE (Vasse) [4.10 p.m.] I also want to have my opposition to the motion recorded. I am aware of the Standing Order, but the Standing Orders will also ensure that my opposition is recorded in *Hansard*.

Mr Tonkin: You do that by a division vote.

Mr BLAIKIE: I want to do it by way of some comments that—

The SPEAKER: I am getting thoroughly fed up with this tedious repetition.

Mr BLAIKIE: I have not started yet, Mr Speaker. It is all very well for the Government to move for suspension of Standing Orders, as it has done, and for members who have been in this House for as long as I have—some 14 years—to see the role the Leader of the House takes, because members will certainly recall that the Leader of the House is a zealot for reform of the Parliament and has always been one. He has always championed the role of the Parliament, the committee system of the Parliament, and the role of members of Parliament. Yet this very issue currently before the House denies individual members of Parliament the opportunity to raise matters before the Parliament from here on and until the Parliament rises. The motion is that Government business take precedence over all other matters.

Mr Tonkin: The motion you always moved when in Government.

Mr BLAIKIE: The Leader of the House can make those comments, but I recall his being on this side of the House and how he used to speak on this matter time and time again in a different vein.

Another matter I wish to raise, which has not been canvassed before, Mr Speaker, is that it is not good enough for the Government to say that private members can raise matters in the Address-in-Reply debate, because that has already finished. They may well wish to raise matters in the Budget debate, but the general debate has finished.

Mr Tonkin: You have the Estimates—you can talk about police, education, and such other matters.

Mr BLAIKIE: The general debate on the Budget concluded last week. The point I want to raise—and I take considerable exception to the way the Treasurer replied on behalf of the Government—is that there were a number of private members who raised a number of matters in relation to that debate; not one of those matters was answered, or acknowledged—

The SPEAKER: This has nothing at all to do with the motion. I warn the member for Vasse—I will give him a couple of minutes to read Standing Order No. 142 before I give him the call.

Mr BLAIKIE: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Take the Standing Orders and read them.

Mr BLAIKIE: My comments will finish in a minute or two, Mr Speaker. I am aware of Standing Order No. 142 but it is simply not fair for the Government to say there are a number of other areas where private members can raise matters of concern to them. That is just not the case.

My final comments are that the chickens will all come home to roost on this matter when the Government changes. As a country member I take great exception to the sitting hours with which we are now faced. Country members are certainly disadvantaged in this respect. With the limited scope left to me, I totally reject the Government's proposition.

MR CRANE (Moore) [4.15 p.m.]: I object to this motion on the two points which are framed in the motion.

Point (a) concerns grievances, which are an opportunity for backbenchers, who do not get very much opportunity in this place, to speak. They work like hell before elections but, having won, they are relegated to the back benches for three years while others take all the honour and glory, and make all the mistakes possible, and the poor old backbencher has to win his seat once more. Grievances are an opportunity for the backbenchers to bring to the attention of the House points which are of concern to them or some of their constituents, or to the State.

Since I entered Parliament—and I am not going to talk about how long I have been here because I am a relatively new member compared with some of the other granddaddies here—I have been a fairly fast learner, and the system does not seem to give the member on the backbench the opportunities that one would think he deserves, when one takes into consideration the contribution backbenchers make to the election of Governments. I am

disappointed that there will be no opportunity for grievances on more than one day during the whole of this session of Parliament.

Point (b) of the motion is very close to my heart because I do have a private member's Bill on the Notice Paper.

Mr Tonkin: We will be dealing with it.

Mr CRANE: I wanted to be assured of that. In asking that question and gaining that assurance, I want to remind the House that the rural situation is very serious indeed; I ask the Leader of the House and the Government how much longer they think farmers are able to tread water, because it is getting very deep out there and they do need some relief. It is a shame and an indictment of this place that it was necessary for me to move a private member's Bill before any action was taken regarding the farmers' situation, either by the Primary Industry Association, this Parliament, or this Government.

Mr Evans: What are you talking about?

Mr CRANE: The Minister for Agriculture knows what I am talking about. I assure him that I can mix it with the best of them. I just want that assurance.

Mr Tonkin: I have given it to you.

Mr CRANE: I am happy that the Leader of the House has, and that some positive action will be taken to relieve this very serious situation in the rural industry. I am glad that it is on the record now.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes 25

Mr Barnett	Mr Hughes
Mr Bateman	Mr Jamieson
Mr Bertram	Mr McIver
Mr Bridge	Mr Parker
Mrs Buchanan	Mr Pearce
Mr Brian Burke	Mr Read
Mr Terry Burke	Mr D. L. Smith
Mr Burkett	Mr P. J. Smith
Mr Carr	Mr Taylor
Mr Evans	Mr Tonkin
Mr Grill	Mr Wilson
Mrs Henderson	Mr Gordon Hill
Mr Hodge	

(Teller)

Noes 19

Mr Blaikie	Mr Old
Mr Bradshaw	Mr Rushton
Mr Cash	Mr Spriggs
Mr Clarko	Mr Stephens
Mr Grayden	Mr Thompson
Mr Hassell	Mr Trethowan
Mr Peter Jones	Mr Tubby
Mr Laurance	Mr Watt
Mr MacKinnon	Mr Crane
Mr Mensaros	

(Teller)

Pairs

Ayes	Noes
Mr Tom Jones	Mr Williams
Mrs Beggs	Mr Coyne
Mrs Watkins	Mr McNee
Mr Bryce	Mr Court
Mr Troy	Mr Cowan
Mr Davies	Dr Dadour

Question thus passed.

BILLS (4) : MESSAGES

Appropriations

Messages from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the following Bills—

1. Superannuation and Family Benefits Amendment Bill.
2. Loan Bill.
3. Oil Refinery Industry (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company Limited) Amendment Bill.
4. Camballin Farms (AIL Holdings Pty. Ltd.) Agreement Bill.

FIRE BRIGADES SUPERANNUATION BILL

Second Reading

MR CARR (Geraldton—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) [4.24 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill makes better provision for the management of the existing fire brigade superannuation fund and the fire brigades disablement fund. It also provides for greater employee participation in the management of the funds, and widens the scope of investment powers by the funds to provide performance returns in keeping with the market opportunities.

Both funds are currently governed by regulations made under the Fire Brigades Act 1942-1982 which provides for the Fire Brigades Board to be the sole trustee in both cases. Under existing legislation there is no provision for the members of the funds to be involved in decisions made relating to benefits or investments other than by way of advisory committees and there is no requirement for the funds to report to the members on performance returns or other matters.

The purposes of this Bill are as follows—

- (1) To establish two separate boards as corporate bodies, independent of the Fire Brigades Board, to administer

and manage the fire brigades superannuation fund and the fire brigades disablement fund.

- (2) To provide representation on both boards by an equal number of employer-appointed and employee-elected members. In both cases, the boards will comprise six members, three of whom will be elected by the members of the respective funds by secret ballot, and three of whom will be appointed by the Fire Brigades Board.

Appointment or election to a board will be for a period not exceeding three years and in the case of elected members, one position will become vacant each year. This move to employee representation is in keeping with the Government's objective of a greater degree of employee participation in decision-making on matters which concern them and is in line with a national trend amongst superannuation schemes.

- (3) To widen the scope of investment opportunities available to the funds and remove the restrictions imposed by the current regulations which limit investments to those authorised by the Western Australian Trustee Act. This limitation makes it difficult for the funds to maximise their returns and to provide optimum benefits to our retiring firefighters and other staff participating in the scheme. The removal of this limitation will give greater flexibility to the trustees and their investment managers to take full advantage of market opportunities in order to provide performance returns which better correlate with those achieved by other like funds in what is a highly competitive market.
- (4) To provide membership in the superannuation fund to employees of certain associated employers, viz—

Western Australian Volunteer Fire Brigades Association;

Fire Brigade Employees' Credit Union Society; and

Fire Brigade Employees' Union.

Membership available to these employees will be identical to that available to fire brigade employees and contributions will be fully paid by

those employers and employees with no additional costs to the Fire Brigades Board.

- (5) To formalise and improve procedures for reporting to members on the performance and financial situation of their funds and other matters which may interest them. Currently, no such formal arrangements exist and this has been a continual source of irritation amongst the members. This move is in line with current trends towards greater interest amongst fund members in the disposition of money which they have invested in superannuation and like funds.
- (6) To secure and maintain all existing benefits and current levels of contributions from both employer and employees participating in both funds.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Thompson.

BLOOD DONATION (LIMITATION OF LIABILITY) BILL

Second Reading

MR HODGE (Melville—Minister for Health) [4.27 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill has been made necessary as a direct result of the disease, acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS as it is more commonly known.

Members will be well aware that AIDS has become one of the most serious health problems to face our community in recent years. In particular, the disease has presented formidable challenges to the operations of a vital health care resource—the blood transfusion service.

While a great deal remains to be discovered about the nature and cause of AIDS, medical science has identified blood as being one of the means through which the AIDS virus can be transmitted from person to person. The problem is compounded by the fact that it can take a considerable period for symptoms of the disease to develop. This Bill seeks to limit the legal liability of the Red Cross Society in claims concerning the transmission of the AIDS virus through the society's blood transfusion service provided the society complies with certain specified requirements.

The Bill will also protect hospitals providing services similar to the blood bank. This protection will also extend to persons administering blood, and blood products derived from blood supplied by the society and the hospitals, again provided that the specified requirements are met. The proposed legislation will especially safeguard the interests of donors to the blood bank.

At the outset, I assure the House that as a result of a number of measures that have been introduced in recent months to fight the disease, the chances of contracting AIDS through the blood transfusion service operating in Western Australia are remote. Not only are intending donors required to complete statutory declarations, but also donations of blood are not accepted from people in a high-risk category. As well, every blood donation is tested by the blood transfusion service for the presence of AIDS virus, or its antibodies.

Nevertheless, the national insurers of the Red Cross Society have taken the view that the risk is unacceptable and have withdrawn the society's public liability cover as from 30 June last in so far as it relates to AIDS. The House will appreciate that this puts the society in an untenable position. The blood transfusion service is vital to the community. But without insurance cover, the ability of the Red Cross Society to continue to provide this essential service must be considered in jeopardy.

Accordingly this Bill will establish a defence to any action brought against the society or a hospital by or on behalf of a person who claims to have contracted AIDS, provided the society or hospital has complied with the requirements prescribed in the Bill. These requirements are that the society or hospital obtains a statutory declaration from a donor prior to a donation of blood stating that he or she is not in one of the specified groups at risk of contracting AIDS. In addition blood or a blood product must not be supplied by the society or hospital unless a sample of the blood shows a negative result for the AIDS virus using an approved test.

Similar defences are established concerning the administration of blood or a blood product to a patient at a hospital or by a medical practitioner or other person involved, provided that the blood or blood product used carries a certificate that the approved test for AIDS was negative, and that no such person is found guilty of negligence or wilful misconduct in re-

spect of the taking, testing, storage, handling, labelling, or administering of that blood or blood product to that patient.

No proceedings, either civil or criminal, will lie against a blood donor unless the donor has been found guilty of knowingly making a false statement in the declaration made to the society or hospital. If a person is found guilty of knowingly making a false statement in the declaration, he or she not only loses his or her protection from claims given by this Bill, but also becomes liable to be prosecuted under the Criminal Code for this offence, which carries an imprisonment sentence of a maximum of three years with hard labour.

The defences I have outlined will not be available if the society or hospital fails to take reasonable steps to prevent the administration of blood or a blood product which it has reasonable grounds for believing may be contaminated by AIDS, or if a hospital or medical practitioner has been informed of likely contamination before the blood or blood product is administered.

The overall effect is that the society, hospitals, doctors, and persons acting on their behalf will be protected from claims relating to the transmission of AIDS if all due diligence and care have been exercised in providing and administering the blood or blood product.

Absolute protection will be given by this Bill to blood donors disclosing all requested information to the society in the statutory declaration. This will provide donors with a continuity of protection whether under the society's previously existing public liability insurance cover or under this proposed legislation.

The blood transfusion service depends upon the goodwill of the public for a continuation of blood donations, and the society's image in the eyes of the donors must never be clouded by any deterrent to them donating their blood when they are not in an "at risk" category.

This Bill will be retrospective to 30 June of this year, which is the date when the national insurance cover for the Red Cross Society expired.

Part II of the Bill specifies the existing requirements of the statutory declaration and the testing of blood to provide a retrospective defence, and part III introduces an additional requirement for a signed laboratory certificate to be attached to the blood container.

Similar legislation is now in the process of being enacted in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. Tasmania intends to in-

roduce its legislation in its next parliamentary session. The Australian Capital Territory has passed an ordinance which all of the other States mentioned have used as a guide in preparation of their legislation.

This Bill follows generally along the lines of the ACT ordinance except that provision had to be made for emergency situations relating to the supply of tested blood, which sometimes occur because of the huge distances between the hospitals in the north of this State and Perth. This is a situation which would not occur in other States.

The problem was illustrated in the recent case at Port Hedland which I reported to the House on 17 September. Members will recall that the supply of tested blood of a particular type on hand at Port Hedland Hospital ran out. Blood had to be obtained from regular donors whose blood had been previously tested and found to be free of AIDS antibodies, for transfusion into a badly injured industrial worker from Karratha Transfusions given at Karratha and Port Hedland exhausted local supplies of that type. There was insufficient time to fly tested blood from Perth or any other major centre, and no facilities existed for AIDS testing at Port Hedland. The decision had to be made to use untested blood.

All donors completed statutory declarations, so every precaution was taken to ensure that, in those given circumstances, the risk of transmission of AIDS was at an absolute minimum. Medical authorities in Perth later confirmed that without that transfusion of whole blood, the worker would have died.

Because of the remoteness of these major industrial centres from Perth and the limited life of whole blood, it is unlikely that adequate stocks of every type of blood could be stocked at each centre to handle major industrial accidents. To recognise and provide for such circumstances, an exemption has been placed in the Bill. This states that a defence to a claim will not be defeated by using blood, untested for AIDS antibodies where, in the opinion of not less than two medical practitioners, a person will likely die unless blood is administered and where tested blood is unavailable or unobtainable in time.

In seeking support for this Bill I reaffirm how crucial it is to our health care system in this State that Parliament put beyond doubt the capacity of the Red Cross Society to provide a blood transfusion service. Our hospitals and our doctors must also be unhindered in provid-

ing a service so vital to our community. As well, it is essential that the State indemnify the many public-spirited people who support the service through blood donations.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Thompson.

CAMBALLIN FARMS (AIL HOLDINGS PTY. LTD.) AGREEMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [4.38 p.m.]: At the outset, I compliment the Minister on the very courteous way in which he has extended to the Opposition all the information required in order to be able to respond adequately to this Bill. He indicated there was some need for the Parliament to expedite the Bill, and he approached the Leader of the Opposition and me, as I was due to handle the Bill in the House, with an advance copy of the second reading speech and indicated he would make a senior officer available to me to have discussions in order to be able to understand the implications of the Bill. He has been very courteous in every way. He has set an example for his fellow Ministers, and if the Government took that attitude it would find the business of the House would be facilitated a lot better than it has been throughout this current session.

Western Australia is a huge State. It is the size of the continent of India. It has a very small population and I think there is a tremendous responsibility on our population to try to develop the resources Western Australia offers. Most of our resources have been developed in the south of the State, but the real challenge for the future is to establish, identify, and develop the resources that are available in the north of the State. It is a tremendous challenge for the people of this State to take up, but it is not an easy one.

I have long been an advocate of incentives to people to live, work, and develop projects in the north of the State. There are many examples around the world where difficult development areas have been given special incentives in order to encourage development. Some of those incentives have been offered by countries like Ireland. One could hardly call Ireland an undeveloped country. One will find incentives offered in many other countries around the world in order to be able to attract new businesses, entrepreneurs, and developers; the reason is that if one can breathe life into the

projects and get them under way they will become profitable, employ people, and utilise the resources to the benefit of the citizens of the State. That same challenge lies in the north of the State. Many of those challenges have been made over the last 20 to 25 years, especially in the Pilbara region. The Kimberley is another region where attempts have been made to utilise the resources, particularly in places like the Ord and the Fitzroy Rivers.

Mr Bridge: And now in the pastoral industry.

Mr LAURANCE: Yes. We have some difficulties with the concept but we have not found any argument with what the Government is trying to do, and I wish it well.

If it does not work it will not be the fault of the member. I do not doubt his sincerity in trying to achieve what he is in the pastoral industry in the Kimberley region. It has its own problems, as the member is well aware. Most developments in the Kimberley have problems because of the distance from markets and a variety of other factors. It is difficult country, and it is challenging to try to provide the answers. Mistakes will be made.

This agreement relates to the Liveringa Station and the Camballin Farms project. It has had a long history, and mostly it has been successful. I do not think we can afford to give up. The State has considerable investments in that area as a result of its part in a number of development agreements which have been entered into over the years. We have a responsibility as a State and as a Parliament to continue to work to find solutions to the problems which face that project. And they will be found. I am sure there are people in the world prepared to come out and put in their efforts, finances and expertise in order to succeed eventually. When they do succeed, we will be able to say it was all worthwhile.

Members on both sides of the Parliament will be able to take some credit from the fact that we did not give up; we recognised the difficulties and we searched the world for people prepared to come and put their finance, their expertise and their efforts into that particular area.

The Fitzroy plains have enormous potential. They could provide a tremendous amount of food for the world. The Fitzroy River is an enormous river which should be harnessed for the benefit of the citizens of our State and the world.

There is a need to dam the Fitzroy River and to utilise the water for as many uses as possible. The Ord is a great river also. That has been dammed and various people, including the previous Premier, Sir Charles Court were criticised mercilessly for doing so. In the long run however, it will be proved that he showed great statesmanship in damming the Ord River.

The Fitzroy River is even greater. It carries considerably more water. It is closer to the developed areas of the State. Eventually this State will see it is worth its while to construct a dam on that river. It will make the river easier to control. Part of the difficulty in the past has been that it is such a mighty river and it is so difficult to harness and control.

Those answers will be found too. We must put aside those past difficulties. The 1981 agreement was brought here by the previous Government with great hope that at last we would be able to introduce a very wealthy developer to the project. This developer would be able to provide sufficient finance for that project to get off the ground.

Unfortunately that was not to be. We all have our critics for not being able to see that 1981 agreement successfully brought to fruition. There has been criticism of the previous Government, myself as Minister Assisting the Minister for Regional Administration and the North West at the time, the then Premier and other Ministers, that the State overcommitted itself in the 1981 agreement. I want to remind the Parliament that at that time Mr Jack Fletcher and his colleagues had spent many years on the Fitzroy trying to get this project up and running, had committed many millions of dollars, had run out of funds and had sought the cooperation of the State in order to introduce a new financial partner.

The 1981 agreement allowed for a very large United States institution to come into the agreement. That was the Aetna Life and Casualty Company of America. That company invested \$US30 million in order to finance the project and to establish a very considerable sorghum project.

The State had its responsibilities under that agreement, particularly for the supply of water, as had occurred over many years prior to the agreement. In particular the State had to provide grain handling facilities at the Port of Broome both for storage and shipping. An enormous grain handling store shed was built at Broome at a cost of \$3 million.

That expenditure can be criticised. The State contributed \$3 million towards those facilities which are still there and which hopefully will be used in the future. That is against a contribution of some \$30 million by the Aetna Life and Casualty Company. That is the sort of risk that the taxpayers of this State want to see us embark on. If it had worked out, enormous benefits would have accrued to the State as a whole. Up to date it has not worked.

This agreement represents another chapter in the whole sorry saga. I wish the Government and the people involved in the project well. I hope that this time we will have found a solution to the problems. Last time, when the 1981 agreement was brought to the Parliament, a great deal of hope was expressed. I am sure that in 1985, as the agreement comes before the Parliament again, everyone in this House will hope that we have at last been able to provide the answers we are searching for in the successful development of Camballin Farms.

Everyone in the Parliament should be taking this approach, because despite the odd wrangle backwards and forwards across the Parliament concerning this project, there has been general agreement on the bipartisan approach. This development will be to the benefit of the State, and Governments of any political colour should be taking that approach and doing what they can in order to make it succeed.

One of the reasons for bringing the agreement before the Parliament today is spelt out clearly in the second reading speech. It was indicated that the Government wished to maintain the confidence of many international investors that their investments in this State were secure and investors would be treated fairly. That refers to the agreement giving Aetna company the opportunity to go out and sell its interest in the project around the world. If the State had not done that our international standing could have been harmed. If we had said, "We are happy for you to come in here and spend \$30 million"—in fact it was more than that in the end—and then said, "We will determine the agreement against you and send you packing," our international standing would have suffered.

I am pleased the State has not seen fit to do that. It has given Aetna the opportunity to sell its interest. That is the only way the company will retrieve anything out of its considerable investment.

There is another motive in bringing this agreement before the Parliament. Over the past 30 years \$15 million of the State's money has been invested in supplying support facilities such as water supply, roadworks and so on. That is at today's values. So the State has made valiant efforts to make the Fitzroy produce irrigated crops. We have such a substantial investment of the State's money there already that while we can find people prepared to expend further money on this project we should give them that opportunity.

We should see whether we can utilise the resources that we have already injected as long as, of course, we do not pour additional State funds down the drain. I do not think we will do so under the terms of this agreement.

To date I have been able to say the Opposition supports this Bill and we wish the Government and the new partners who will form the consortium known as AIL Holdings Pty Ltd well. The acronym that comes from the name Australasian Investments Limited spells the word "ail", and that does not augur well for the project. I hope we will not be able to make that point in the future for the venturers' sake and that of this State generally.

While adopting a bipartisan approach in my comments today, I want to strike a discordant note for a moment. I ask the Minister if he can see any hypocrisy on the part of the Government in that the Government is bringing in an agreement to the Parliament, introducing another international overseas group of business people, when an agreement has recently been before the Parliament relating to an adjoining pastoral lease in relation to which the Government introduced its own agency, Exim Corporation, to prevent an international project coming on to the scene. It is a bit of a paradox that this agreement has been brought to the Parliament pretty rapidly in order to give as much support as possible to this international group to enable it to get going in the Kimberley, yet only a matter of days ago we were arguing the merits or otherwise of the State going to extraordinary lengths to keep out any interstate or overseas buyer. The Government must be charged with some hypocrisy over that issue.

When it was rumoured that a person such as Kerry Packer might be interested in purchasing the Emanuel lease or that an international or overseas group might show some interest in it, the State Government moved quickly and, in a very preemptory way, cancelled the aspirations

of at least two Western Australian buyers that we have identified. The Government has acknowledged it will proceed with the projects on those leases. It introduced the Exim Corporation, which in a very unsatisfactory way has undertaken the purchase of these properties for the Government. It paid commission clandestinely to an agency and also paid an amount of money to an option operator and just brushed aside the bona fide Western Australian people who wanted to purchase the Emanuel lease. Western Australians were blocked from those leases by the Government. On the other hand, in relation to the Camballin project, the Government has searched the world to find an international group to introduce to the project. That seems to be quite a contradiction.

Secondly, what will Exim Corporation's involvement be in relation to this project? We know Exim is involved with the Emanuel lease nearby and the adjoining ALCCO lease which has been forfeited by the Government and which, I understand, is now the subject of some litigation between the purchasing parties and the State. Presumably Exim will be involved in the split-up of those properties. I seek an assurance from the Minister that there will be no involvement by Exim in this exercise and agreement because if Exim were involved it would make a complete joke of what the Government is trying to do in the Kimberley.

Clause 2 of the schedule relates to definitions and interpretations. The definition of associated company is, "Camballin Farms Pty. Ltd. a company incorporated in the said State and any other company approved by the Minister for the purpose of this definition". I ask the Minister: Is that the way in which Exim will be involved in this project? Will it play a part and, if so, what part will it play? Will the advisory committee which is set up to look at Kimberley land and which comprises Mr Stephen Hawke and others, be involved in the current Camballin Farms project? Will Mr Stephen Hawke's father, the Prime Minister, forward \$6 million or some such amount for the State to become involved through Exim Corporation?

It is appropriate that the Opposition raise this matter at this time. I ask the Minister: Will we see the same sort of fiasco in relation to the Liveringa pastoral lease as we recently had in relation to the Emanuel lease?

Mr Bridge: There are no parallels with the two.

Mr Grill: And no fiasco at all, I might add. If ever there was a fiasco, it was the way the previous Government handled the matter—completely incompetently and completely ineptly, in every respect ignoring proper advice from the Crown Law Department and the Department of Agriculture—an absolute disgrace on the part of the previous Government.

Mr LAURANCE: That is an interesting matter. The Minister who just interjected obviously seems to know quite a bit about this matter. I ask what the role of his department of the north-west has been in the preparation of this legislation and why, for instance, he is not introducing the Bill as was the case when this agreement was previously before the Parliament.

Mr Grill: I will tell you very quickly. My department has played a leading role in respect of the matter, but in a formal sense the matter very properly comes within the jurisdiction of the Minister for Lands and Surveys who has been very happy to handle it.

Mr LAURANCE: Fine. Briefly covering the terms of the agreement and what it seeks to do, I want to refer to the three levels of activity that are referred to in it. The first is the re-establishment of Liveringa Station as a fully-stocked, viable pastoral lease. If the new developers being introduced under this agreement do only that it will achieve a worthwhile objective and will bring Liveringa back to productivity.

The figures indicate it is intended to raise the stocking level from approximately 6 000 as at present to 22 000 head of cattle. If they are able to do that it will be a very worthwhile part of this agreement.

The second major objective is the three to five year experimental programme on the Camballin lands to identify crops suitable for further development. Once again, that augurs well for the future of the development. I trust that by not giving a commitment to proceed with magnificent and lavish large-scale developments—which has been one of the criticisms which can be levelled at past attempts—by being perhaps more realistic in terms of what they hope to achieve, this agreement will be able to be satisfied far more fully than has been the case in the past. The developers are being very realistic in regard to what they think they can possibly achieve.

The third objection is a study of the potential for joint ventures on the project lands which might establish roadworks and therefore raise capital input; once again, that was looked into

previously, and if the project had ever got to that stage, it could have happened under previous agreements. I trust that this agreement will lead to a satisfactory situation in which other parties are brought in. I am pleased that the agreement allows for that situation and I certainly hope it comes to pass.

It is fair to say also that this international consortium which includes American and European interests is led by an Israeli group. The Israelis have shown the world what can be achieved in relation to arid area irrigation and agriculture and hopefully the experience they built up in their own country will be of benefit to the Camballin project.

I want to refer quickly to the terms of the agreement. Firstly, the entire 22 000 hectares that was identified previously under the 1981 agreement is the subject of this agreement, and I think that is appropriate; the situation is as it should be. The two areas of freehold land in this total area are known as Camballin Farms and they are being granted to the new group because the land was in fact previously made freehold under the 1981 agreement to the former parties.

I ask the Minister whether the two locations identified on the plan he tabled—Location 30 and Location 39—total the 5 700 hectares which were acquired by the previous developers because there is no indication of the size of the area. I assumed that to be the case, but I would like him to confirm that those two areas equal 5 700 hectares which were cleared and levelled ready for irrigation and, I think, carried a crop. That was done by the previous developers.

Mr McIver: There was also an exchange shown on the plan in red.

Mr LAURANCE: That seems to be a minor area. It is a bit of a tidying up exercise, and we accept it as such.

There is also the special lease area which is the balance of the 22 000 hectares. There is a requirement that the company should cause to carry out a survey of the leased area and have the same approved by the Surveyor General as soon as practicable. That is a very important clause. One of the weaknesses of the 1981 agreement was that the parties never proceeded to a survey. It is important that the area of land which is the subject of the agreement be identified clearly and accurately. I welcome that clause which calls on the company to have the survey carried out quickly, and I understand

from discussions with the Minister and his senior adviser that the survey is already in hand.

I note the special lease was deemed to have commenced on 1 July 1985. Therefore, for all intents and purposes the new parties have actually taken possession and are operating. That is one of the reasons the Minister has brought this agreement to the Parliament and seeks to have it proceeded with expeditiously.

Clause 5(4) of the schedule refers to the rental. I want to touch briefly on this point. Virtually the same rental has been agreed to as in the 1981 agreement. Members may ask whether the rental should have been increased if only to keep up with inflation in the interim. I think it is appropriate that the Government has seen fit to round off the previous rental. I think it was \$47.50 per 500 hectares or thereabouts, and in the current agreement it has been increased to \$50 per 500 hectares. I noticed there was some criticism in the week-end Press about the small rental which would result from this agreement. I think the figure is appropriate. It is not a matter of the rental that is achieved by the Government in leasing this land; it is more the amount of development finance that will be injected into the project by the partners. That is what the State is looking for—a commitment and financial involvement, and most of all a satisfactory result. The rental is a nominal amount which can be increased in the future as the project shows it is capable of sustaining an increased rental. That is fair on the part of the State.

The company's commitment is outlined more clearly in clause 6(6) which relates to the amount of \$3.4 million being spent by 31 December 1990. In the first five years the company must spend \$3.4 million, and the agreement outlines the sort of works which must be carried out with that money. It is not a huge amount in terms of the money which has been expended to date on this agreement. However, it should be enough to prove that the project can proceed and is achieving reasonable results, in which case I guess the company and certainly the Government will be looking for increased expenditure.

The agreement allows for further land to be granted to the company if it has carried out that which it has agreed to.

I want to refer to a couple of other areas. One is quite complex, and it is the matter of the levee which was built to keep back the floodwaters of the Fitzroy River. Members who

understand something of this area will know there is a very rich black soil plain area which is usually dry and can be irrigated from the waters of the Fitzroy for most of the year as a result of the barrage the Government has built and the 17 Mile Dam. The problem in most parts of the year is to get the water on to the black soil plains. When the Fitzroy floods, the reverse is the problem—to keep the water off the plains. There must be storage to supply water in the dry season, and some mechanism to keep the water off the plains in the wet season.

Under the 1981 agreement the levee was built by the former company, and this is where I refute what the Minister for Regional Development and the North West said a moment ago by way of interjection. Many millions of dollars have been spent on the levee. It is still there. It was damaged in the 1983 flood, but it can be repaired for a reasonable amount compared with the original cost of construction. That levee is vital if this project is to get under way. A great deal of the work which has been done is still of benefit to future development.

The levee will be reconstructed under a complex agreement which involves the vendor, Aetna Life Insurance Company, the State, and the new developers AIL Holdings Pty Ltd, and an amount of \$750 000 will be put into a levee credit. This amount will be written off by the Government over the first few years of the project in return for water charges. The company will pay \$150 000 in the first year while the levee bank is being constructed, and \$180 000 a year for the next five years for water which will be written off against the amount of the levee credit. When that sum of money is utilised and the project is proceeding on course the company will pay the normal water charges to the Water Authority of Western Australia in return for water it supplies to the project.

The State in turn agrees to waive stamp duty to the tune of \$240 000 and one clause of the agreement indicates the way in which that stamp duty will be foregone by the State. However, at the end of the period, by 1 July 1990, the company will pay an equivalent amount to the State of the stamp duty foregone. It equals \$240 465, so that while the State will forego the interest on that revenue or the use of the revenue between now and 1990, the company will not get out of paying stamp duty, but will be able to postpone the payment for the first few years.

That is another instance in which the Government has given every encouragement to the developers in order to attract them to this project, to bring in their finance and expertise, and to try to make it work.

I think the State's interest is protected. As I indicated earlier, the lease rentals can be reviewed at regular intervals. The amount of land that will be granted to the company will only be granted in stages according to the performance of the company, so that as it expends its funds and upholds its obligations under the agreement, if it does so satisfactorily it will be entitled to further grants of land. That encompasses the spirit of the 1981 agreement and is fair to all parties.

Another point I wish to make relates to clause 18 of the agreement, which refers to the access road from Derby to Camballin. It says—

The State will use all reasonable endeavours to have maintained a trafficable road from Derby to the boundary of Camballin townsite . . .

It is not usual to put such a clause in agreements at this time. One of the earliest development agreements written between the State and a development group was the agreement for the salt project at Useless Loop, and that incorporated a clause which required the State to maintain a trafficable road. That development happens to be in my own electorate at Useless Loop. If members were to ask the residents of Useless Loop whether the State has been able to maintain its obligation under that agreement to keep a trafficable road, they would tell members with no uncertainty that the State has not—the road is not trafficable.

Since that time, agreements have generally put the requirement on the company to maintain a trafficable road. I guess it was not appropriate in these circumstances for the company to be called upon to maintain a trafficable road, but there may be problems for the State with the writing into the agreement of the fact that the State will maintain the trafficable road from Derby to the boundary of Camballin townsite.

With those remarks, I indicate that the Opposition is happy to support the agreement Bill before the Parliament, and we wish every success to the partners in AIL Holdings Pty Ltd in their desire to see the Camballin Farms programme succeed.

We support the Bill.

MR McIVER (Avon—Minister for Lands and Surveys) [5.14 p.m.]: I thank the member for Gascoyne for his remarks and the indication that the Opposition supports the measure before the House.

It is quite evident from the manner in which the member for Gascoyne delivered his remarks that he has done his homework thoroughly. I thank him for his generous words at the commencement of his speech but, in fairness, I cannot take all the credit. It was at the insistence of the Leader of the House that seven days was given before this agreement Bill was ratified by the Parliament—the Leader of the House insisted that the Opposition be given seven days.

It is also quite evident that the member for Gascoyne—the former Minister Assisting the Minister for Regional Administration and the North West—is conversant with the problems and the challenges that exist in the area and that, as a former Minister for Lands, he is very familiar with the 1981 project at Camballin.

I also commend and thank very sincerely my colleague, the Minister for Regional Development and the North West, who gave many hours to the discussions that we had in relation to setting up this agreement; and also his departmental officers. He was the convener and did an excellent job in the discussions held with the receiver-manager for Aetna.

[Questions taken.]

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.15 p.m.

Mr McIVER: In paying tribute to the people who formulated the agreement now before this Parliament I wish to include the officers of the Lands and Surveys Department, particularly the Assistant Under Secretary, Mr Mickle, who gave much of his time in formulating the legislation.

In answer to some of the points raised by the member for Gascoyne, I wish to say that the Government is not hypocritical about this agreement. The member raised that point when talking about the Emanuel leases. This is a different situation entirely. As I said when I dealt with a debate about the Emanuel leases several weeks ago, the Opposition had overlooked the lessee's situation. Apparently that point has still not got through to the Opposition.

Mr Laurance: I am sorry, I missed your point.

Mr McIVER: Mr Emanuel did not want Mr Packer to take over his leases. He wanted the leases to go to people whom he felt would look after them properly. The Emanuel empire had been built up over 100 years. Mr Emanuel did not want to see the leases disintegrate or someone sell off the cattle and rape the land. He approached the Government; the Government did not approach him. That is a very important point.

Mr Blaikie: Why did the Government pay \$90 000 for the leases?

Mr McIVER: We are not dealing with that matter. We are dealing with the Camballin Farms (AIL Holdings Pty. Ltd.) Agreement Bill. I mentioned that matter because it was raised by the member for Gascoyne.

The member for Gascoyne raised a further matter about investment. The people who represented Aetna travelled the world endeavouring to get someone to take on the project. The only group that could be encouraged was AIL Holdings Pty. Ltd. No-one could be tempted into accepting the tender price. Hence, a foreign group, as the member indicated, has the Opposition's blessing in taking up those leases.

Exim Corporation is in no way involved or has been involved in the formulation of the agreement.

Exim is not involved in Camballin, and, to the best of my knowledge, it will not be involved in the future. This is wholly and solely a Government matter and it will be monitored by the respective departments.

Mr Laurance: I thank the Minister for that assurance.

Mr Court: The Minister may not know about it until it has happened.

Mr McIVER: The Minister knows very well what will happen.

The member for Gascoyne convinced me that he is conversant with the financing of the lease arrangement, particularly the levee bank situation. I say facetiously that the night before the flooding at Fitzroy River I signed documents making the Government responsible for the levee bank which was worth \$2 million—the next day it was washed away. It was certainly great timing!

The member for Gascoyne also asked me to comment in relation to the associated company that would result from whatever group AIL chooses to involve in the project. The Government will deal with this matter on its merits

when it happens. When it does happen, the Government will look carefully at the proposal to ascertain what involvement it will have.

Mr Laurance: That may be the way in which Exim will become involved in the future.

Mr McIVER: No, it will not be Exim's role.

Reference was also made by the member for Gascoyne to the freeholding of two lots.

Mr Laurance: Locations 30 and 39.

Mr McIVER: They are not part of the 5 700 hectares.

Mr Laurance: None of it?

Mr McIVER: No, those locations do not comprise part of the 5 700 hectares. Those areas were previously developed and as the member for Gascoyne rightly said they are freehold land.

Mr Laurance: What is the area involved in Locations 30 and 39?

Mr McIVER: I am sure that the map I tabled indicates that.

Mr Laurance: No, it does not. I thought it might have been 5 700 hectares and I related that to the overall size of the development.

Mr McIVER: That area has already been developed and irrigated. I do not know the acreage involved but I will have the matter checked. However, as those locations do not form part of the 5 700 hectares I did not research that aspect.

Mr Laurance: I would appreciate knowing the area involved. Perhaps the Minister could have that information available when the Bill is discussed in another place.

Mr McIVER: I will give my assurance that I will have the information available when the Bill is introduced into another place.

The member for Gascoyne asked when the agreement relating to the access road was formulated. I refer the member to section 92 of the 1969 agreement which sets out in detail information relating to the access road. I advise that the point raised by the member in relation to the local shire's responsibility was considered, but it was felt it would be reasonable to retain the provisions outlined in the 1969 agreement.

Mr Laurance: Was it also incorporated in the 1981 agreement? I am not trying to be clever, but I do not know whether it was included in that agreement.

Mr McIVER: No, it was not. It was included in the 1969 agreement only.

I have covered the points raised by the member for Gascoyne and I would only be taking up the time of the House if I spoke about the levee bank and the credit against the debit. I understand that those issues are fully appreciated and understood by the Opposition and if I were to speak on them I would be indulging in repetition.

Like the member for Gascoyne, I certainly wish AIL every success and I trust that it is able to achieve its goals. A lot of time has been put into this Bill. The Government has provided a number of inducements and has assisted AIL in every way possible and will continue to do so.

I thank the Opposition for its general support of this Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Taylor) in the Chair; Mr McIver (Minister for Lands and Surveys) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 6 put and passed.

Schedule—

Mr LAURANCE: Clause 3 of the schedule refers to the initial obligations of the State. I assume that one of the obligations is that there will be a requirement on the part of the State to maintain the facilities that have been erected in Broome—and hopefully, if the company reaches a point where it can export a grain crop, those facilities will be utilised.

The 1981 agreement was built on the premise that a very substantial sorghum crop would be grown, and the company was then trying to establish markets, especially in South-East Asia, for sorghum. It did, to its credit, establish quite a few thousand hectares of sorghum, and I was able to visit the project while that sorghum was under cultivation. It looked good at that time. The company did have a number of setbacks for which it could not be blamed. As the Minister would probably be aware, the fertiliser ship burnt to the waterline on its way from the United States. Even before the remains of the ship could be salvaged, there was international piracy to what was left of the hull. So I do not think the company can be blamed for that. It did make mistakes, but that was not one of them.

Then there was the 1983 flood. The levee bank was built by the previous company to a level that was supposed to withstand a 50-year

flood, according to the Public Works Department. In 1983 the Fitzroy River overtopped the levee.

Mr Barnett: It was a 100-year flood.

Mr LAURANCE: The member makes a good point. Usually these floods are predicted as 10, 20, 50, or 100-year floods, and usually the Public Works Department and most engineers are very conservative when they make such predictions. One would have thought that if the levee bank had been constructed to withstand a one-in-50-year flood, it would have been able to withstand the 1983 flood. However, floods have a nasty habit—we might have two one-in-50-year floods in two years. I am well aware of the problem, having been involved with the Gascoyne River over some 25 years.

Mr Davies: Was that after you prayed for rain?

Mr LAURANCE: We did not get a flood after we prayed for rain, although one or two of my constituents indicated that if we did have a flood, they would sue me. Fortunately, the good Lord sent only a full river and it did not overtop the banks. In fact, it was so spooky that I have decided not to go into that business any more.

Mr Davies: You lack faith, I can see.

Mr LAURANCE: No, the faith was so strong that it brought just a perfect river which it would seem to me to be impossible to repeat. But, getting back to the Fitzroy River, it is a bigger river in terms of flooding. The Gascoyne River is the longest river in the State, but I believe the Fitzroy River carries the most water of any river in the State. The 1983 flood was probably better than a one-in-50-year flood and it is very difficult to engineer works that will withstand something of that force and velocity. That was a difficulty faced by the previous company.

I wish to ask a question of the Minister concerning the facilities built by the State at the Port of Broome. There has been considerable criticism of the State for paying up to about \$3 million to provide these facilities. I understand they are still being maintained and are in working order, and if this company is able to produce grain for export, those facilities would be able to be utilised. I would like to think that they will not be used for any other purpose but be maintained and kept in good order for AIL Holdings Pty Ltd to utilise if it gets to that stage.

I know that under the agreement the company has not committed itself to exporting grain or to making enthusiastic forecasts with which it may not be able to comply, and I have commended it for that; but, on the other hand, anyone with any knowledge of the project would be hoping that the company will be successful enough to be able not only to grow various grain crops—perhaps in partnership with other parties and joint venturers as the agreement allows for—but also to find markets for those crops and export them through the Port of Broome using the facilities constructed there in 1981. They are substantial facilities. I understand that their maintenance would be quite a task, but I believe that the State has an obligation to maintain them, and I ask the Minister to give an indication that that will be the case.

The Minister might also comment on the survey undertaken by the company, upon which I commented previously. I would like to know how far that has progressed.

I also refer briefly to clause 18 of the schedule, relating to the access road to Camballin. I realise the shire has some responsibility, but under the Act the State has the responsibility to maintain a trafficable road, and that could be of some embarrassment to the State in future. I am well aware of the terms of the 1981 agreement because I handled that Bill as the responsible Minister when it was before Parliament. However, I was aware at that time—some four years ago—of the terms of the 1969 agreement. I am not fully conversant with that today and I take the Minister's word that that was a condition of the 1969 agreement, which has been taken virtually word-for-word and placed in the 1985 agreement.

I was not criticising the Government for including that condition; I think it is fair and reasonable. I was covering my tracks because I want to anticipate criticism if there is to be any. I hope to be part of the Government of the day at that time, anyway. I shall probably have to face that criticism.

I thank the Minister for his response at the second reading stage and indicate that we will follow this agreement very carefully, as no doubt the Minister did when he was in Opposition. I cannot remember if he responded when the 1981 agreement was before the Parliament, but the member for Kimberley did. One or two members raised extraneous matters in the 1981 debate. They wanted to know why the \$3 million was not spent in my own electorate of Gascoyne.

It is amazing how circumstances can change one's point of view. Now we would welcome \$3 million from the person who raised that point, the then Leader of the Opposition, now the Premier. The Gascoyne River could do with an expenditure of \$3 million. Now the Premier has a chance to put his money where his mouth was in 1981 and spend that money on the Gascoyne River.

That is just an aside. Most of the members who spoke in 1981 were serious when they said what they did. There is a responsibility on members of Parliament to see that we develop those major projects. That is one with major potential.

I was disappointed with the present Minister for Regional Development and the North West when he indicated that in some way or other we had gone against Crown Law advice in 1981. We acted in good faith and found a very substantial partner. In fact, Jack Fletcher found a substantial partner.

The company came to the State with an enormous amount of money, spending in excess of \$30 million—a very substantial sum indeed. It was not as if this company had no experience in agricultural projects around the world. We said, "Do you realise the Kimberley is a very remote area, and has the capacity to soak up an enormous amount of money?" and the company said, "Yes". To give the Minister an indication of the financial strength of the Aetna Company, it invests about \$2 000 million a year of which over \$400 million a year goes into agricultural projects, mostly in the United States. It also has investments in a significant number of projects in the remote areas of the world.

We felt this company knew what it was doing. It spent that money in good faith and the project did not work.

We might be back here in a few years' time. I might be on the other side of the House and the Minister might be on this side again. We might be bringing in another agreement. I hope that will not be the case; I hope the 1985 agreement will proceed to fruition and the people involved will be successful. That would be in the best interests of the State, and we all have a responsibility to see that that occurs.

That is our reason for supporting this Bill. No agreement will be perfect. This is fair and reasonable. We will watch it to see the State's interests are protected. We hope the money will be well spent and the project does not run into

something like the 1983 flood, an act of nature over which the company had no control. This makes a difficult area even more difficult.

From that point of view we can say only that we join with the Government in hoping that this agreement will be maintained and that it will bring benefits to all the parties involved.

Mr McIVER: Before I reply to the points raised by the member for Gascoyne, I should give members an appreciation of the ferocity of the waters of the Fitzroy River. Not that long ago the Commissioner of Main Roads commissioned a bridge in the Kimberley. I am not being in any way derogatory of the Commissioner of Main Roads, but he said, "At last we have tamed the waters of the Fitzroy". Of course, in the last floods the waters of the Fitzroy flowed 15 feet over the top rail! For the first time in Fossil Downs station's history, the water entered the residence and was quite a few metres above the billiard table in the living room. The cattle were 30 feet up in the air in the trees. That gives an indication of the ferocity of the Fitzroy River.

Naturally, as the member for Gascoyne rightly said, the levee bank plays an important role in relation to this agreement. I indicated earlier that on behalf of the Government I took over the responsibility for the levee bank the day before the flood. It was questionable whether the State Government or the company was responsible. Although it was not put to the test, we indicated that the previous developers abandoned the project, therefore we were not responsible for the repair of the levee.

The agreement now sets out clearly how that money is to be paid back. The levee will be repaired. As the member for Gascoyne says, it plays a very important role in this agreement.

I thought I had signed a letter written to the company relating to the grain facilities in Broome. I understand and appreciate the views concerning the utilisation of those grain facilities. I, too, hope the project comes to fruition. The Government hopes to utilise those facilities. We will have further discussions with the company on that aspect.

Mr Laurance: Did your side in fact have to maintain those facilities?

Mr McIVER: The agreement involves maintenance costs generally. Whether that includes the grain facilities at Broome I cannot remember, but I shall make sure a copy of the correspondence is provided, and when the Bill

goes through the other place, I shall ensure that whoever is handling it for the Opposition is provided with that information.

I do not know what stage has been reached at this time in the survey undertaken by the company. However, it is important to have the Bill ratified before the end of the session because some work has already commenced. That is why this agreement is before us now.

Schedule put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

MR McIVER (Avon—Minister for Lands and Surveys) [7.50 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR LAURANCE (Gascoyne) [7.51 p.m.]: I will not delay the House for more than a few moments. I wanted to point out at the third reading stage that the Opposition has had seven days in which to consider this Bill and, quite frankly, if the Opposition had been asked to proceed earlier we would have been quite happy to do so. In view of the discussions that have taken place in the Parliament today I want to say that because of the cooperative way in which the Minister for Lands and Surveys provided information to the Opposition even prior to the introduction of the Bill to the House, but also we appreciated the fact that seven days' notice was provided to the Opposition. Normally seven days would be considered a minimum. However, because of the cooperation extended by the Minister, we would have been prepared to proceed with the Bill last week—although not on 24 hours' notice as the Minister originally indicated, because we had not seen the Bill. As I indicated earlier, we had a preliminary or draft second reading speech four or five days prior to the Bill's arrival here.

I want to reiterate that it is possible for matters to be expedited through the Parliament if courtesy is extended and cooperation is afforded to the Opposition, not only from the Minister but also from his adviser. I must say I appreciated the opportunity of being able to speak to the Minister's adviser. I extended that courtesy to the Minister when I was in a similar position. No confidence was breached or any-

thing like that. The Minister made the adviser available to discuss with me the complex nature of this agreement, and I appreciated that opportunity.

We have heard all the criticism about bringing matters on after only seven days' notice or earlier, and we have said seven days should be a minimum. However, in some circumstances it need not be a minimum. We could have dealt with this matter last week had the Minister wanted to proceed with it after introducing it on Tuesday; if he had wanted to proceed on Wednesday or Thursday that course would have been agreeable to the Opposition because of the way the Minister handled the Bill. I just wanted to make that point. As it was, the Opposition was given seven days' notice and we appreciated those seven days.

Mr McIVER: Could I just correct one point: You referred to my adviser. He is the Assistant Under Secretary for Mines, not an adviser. You should give him his correct title.

Mr LAURANCE: All right. I meant that he was advising the Minister and the Minister made him available to advise me. I meant no disrespect of the officer concerned, because I have worked with him previously and I have the highest regard for him and his advice. There is a lot of difference, and I know the Minister handling the Bill would appreciate that point very much. I referred to the person earlier as a senior officer, when he is in fact the assistant under secretary. He is an excellent officer. I know that he has done a considerable amount of work in regard to this legislation.

I queried the Minister for Regional Development and the North West by way of interjection earlier because I thought perhaps his advisers were handling this Bill, but it was explained why the Minister for Minerals and Energy and his officers were involved. I take the point from the Minister that his departmental advice came from the Assistant Under Secretary for Mines. I appreciated the services of that officer being made available to me.

I just wanted to underline the point that the Opposition does not oppose this Bill. However, it is an important Bill. We wanted to digest it and investigate it thoroughly. I make the point that this process need not necessarily take a long time. If cooperation and courtesy are extended by the Minister handling a particular Bill to the Opposition spokesman, these matters can be handled expeditiously. This is a lesson to the Parliament. If these courtesies had been extended to the Opposition in regard to all the other Bills that we handle, there would

not have been the need for the difficulties and the acrimony we experienced in the Parliament earlier today.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

STAMP AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [7.56 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill proposes to amend the Stamp Act 1921 in order to give effect to two concessions from stamp duty that were announced when introducing the Budget.

In addition, there has been incorporated into this Bill a number of minor amendments which will—

provide exemption from duty for associations of local authorities;

regularise present administrative procedures relating to the duty payable on motor vehicle licences or transfers of licences;

extend the time for lodging documents for stamping;

provide uniformity in the application of penalties; and,

provide for the payment of interest on a refund of duty following a successful objection or appeal.

The Bill also includes the machinery provisions necessary to provide for a returns system for payment of duty on transactions effected by members of the Stock Exchange of the United Kingdom.

I will deal firstly with the Budget measures. At present the Act imposes duty on all leases of property. The amendment proposed in this Bill will provide an exemption from this duty for all residential leases or tenancy agreements with a rental of up to \$80 per week.

The concession will provide relief from stamp duty for low income earners who rent accommodation whether it be a house, a home unit, or a flat. The Government is aware of the costs associated with entering into tenancy agreements of residential properties and the concession granted will remove at least one of those costs.

The other budgetary measure is the removal of the State duty charge on transfers of corporate debt securities which has been an inhibitor

of commercial activity in this area. For the purpose of the Act, corporate debt securities are marketable securities, such as debentures, bonds, or unsecured notes issued by a corporation, company or society.

Most other States provide exemption from duty for transfers of either corporate debt securities or interest-bearing securities, and it is desirable to provide a similar concession in Western Australia. The exemption proposed in this Bill will ensure that the Western Australian market remains competitive. These two measures are expected to cost \$140 000 in 1985-86 and \$340 000 in a full year.

I turn now to the other matters contained in this Bill. Firstly, a provision is proposed which will give exemption from stamp duty to associations of local authorities. These associations work closely with local authorities in formulating and standardising procedures and it would seem appropriate that they be exempt from stamp duty in the same manner as local authorities.

Secondly, a recent investigation by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations revealed that the current practice of the Police Department and other licensing authorities rather than the Commissioner of State Taxation in determining the market value of a motor vehicle was not in accordance with the existing provisions of the Act.

The present procedures have been followed for many years and are in the interests of simplicity and efficiency. It is proposed to amend the law to regularise those procedures. A literal interpretation of the existing provisions of the Act would be impractical for the smooth operations of the licensing procedures.

Thirdly, the Act currently allows for an instrument to be produced for stamping within a period of one calendar month from the date of execution in which case no penalty is incurred. Administratively, the Commissioner of State Taxation does not impose any penalty when the instrument is produced for stamping within three calendar months.

The amendment proposed in this Bill will provide a statutory penalty-free period of up to three months in line with the current administrative practice.

Fourthly, provision is already contained in the Act to allow the commissioner to issue a default assessment of duty which would otherwise be payable had an instrument or return been produced. However, no provision has been made to allow the imposition of a fine

which would have been applicable if the instrument or return had in fact been lodged outside the time allowed for stamping or payment without fine.

The proposal contained in the Bill will allow the commissioner to impose a fine of an amount equal to the amount of duty involved which will be consistent with fines imposed for late stamping. There will of course be provisions to allow the commissioner to remit the fines in whole or in part should the circumstances of any particular case warrant such action.

Fifthly, in a report prepared by a joint professional committee comprising representatives of the accounting and legal professions, it was suggested that uniformity be provided in the objection and appeal provisions of state taxing laws. The Stamp Act basically meets the recommendations made by that committee but falls short on the payment of interest where duty is refunded following a successful objection.

At the present time the Act allows the court to order the payment of interest at a rate of 10 per cent on the refund of duty following determination of an appeal or order an appellant to pay the commissioner interest on any unpaid duty should the appeal be decided in his favour.

The amendment proposed in this Bill will repeal the existing provisions and impose an obligation on the commissioner to pay interest where duty is refunded to a taxpayer following a successful objection or appeal.

The interest is proposed to be at such rate as may be prescribed. This will ensure that the rate of interest can be varied as may be appropriate from time to time.

Finally, this Bill contains the necessary provisions to allow for the payment of stamp duty by means of monthly returns on marketable security transactions effected by members of the Stock Exchange of the United Kingdom.

The present system requires the transfers to be sent by post from the United Kingdom to be individually stamped. In times of buoyant trading this can be a cumbersome system with delays occurring because of the volume of paper involved.

The proposed system will remove much of the paperwork currently being experienced. It will also provide a much faster and simpler method of achieving settlement on dealings in

marketable securities and may consequently make dealings in Australian securities more attractive for the UK investor.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Hassell (Leader of the Opposition).

STAMP AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [8.04 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill is complementary to the Stamp Act Amendment Bill.

The purpose of the Bill is to introduce the necessary provisions into the second schedule of the principal Act to set out the rates of duty which will apply to transactions effected by members of the Stock Exchange of the United Kingdom.

Accordingly I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Hassell (Leader of the Opposition).

PAY-ROLL TAX AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR TONKIN (Morley-Swan—Leader of the House) [8.05 p.m.]: I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Last year the Government, in recognition of the iniquitous burden that payroll tax imposes on business and employment, introduced legislation to reduce the rate of payroll tax from five per cent to 4.75 per cent effective from 1 January 1985.

The measures proposed in this Bill will implement decisions announced in the Budget and provide further relief for small and medium-sized businesses.

The Bill will put into effect a further reduction in the payroll tax rate for all businesses with annual payrolls of less than \$1.408 million. It is estimated that this latest concession will affect more than 5 000 employers, or approximately 85 per cent of those who pay payroll tax.

The Bill provides for a reduction in the rate from the current 4.75 per cent to four per cent, for businesses with annual payrolls of \$880 000 or less.

It provides also for rate reductions for businesses with annual payrolls falling between \$880 000 and \$1.408 million. In these cases, the rate increases gradually above four per cent as the annual payroll amount increases, until the maximum rate of 4.75 per cent is reached at a payroll of \$1.408 million.

The 4.75 per cent will continue to apply to payrolls of \$1.408 million or greater.

These changes will be effective from 1 January 1986 and will ease the burden of payroll tax on small and medium-sized businesses by \$2.3 million in 1985-86 and \$5.4 million in a full year.

The appropriate tax rate will depend on the annual payroll and will be determined according to the level of wages actually paid during the year.

In the case of local employers who are not members of a group, the Bill provides for the rate in any month to be determined on the basis of the actual amount of the particular month's wages in relation to the monthly equivalent of the annual levels at which the various rates apply.

The Bill makes provision for the appropriate tax rate for employers who are members of a group and employers who also pay wages interstate to be determined on the basis of estimates of annual wages. If these estimates are not supplied by these categories of employers then the maximum 4.75 per cent rate will have to be used for the purpose of monthly returns.

It should be noted that, whatever rate is used for the calculation of tax payable each month, the Bill provides for the correct amount of payroll tax for the year to be calculated on the basis of the level of wages actually paid during the year.

In the case of an employer who is a member of a group, the appropriate annual rate will be calculated by reference to the aggregate of wages actually paid by all members of the group who pay wages in Western Australia and, in the case of employers who also pay wages interstate, by reference to the total wages actually paid throughout Australia by that employer.

Any discrepancy between the annual amount payable by an employer and the aggregate of his monthly remittances can be adjusted at the conclusion of the financial year.

The measures contained in the Bill are a tangible demonstration of the Government's desire to alleviate the effects of payroll tax. I am

sure that they will be welcome not only by businesses in Western Australia but also by those who are concerned to see that every effort is made to reduce the incidence of unemployment.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Hassell (Leader of the Opposition).

ACTS AMENDMENT (WATER AUTHORITIES) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 22 October.

MR RUSHTON (Dale) [8.09 p.m.]: The Opposition will not object to this legislation in any way. I would like to express my appreciation to the Minister for making the Committee notes available so that the Bill is much more readily understood in relation to the various changes that are taking place. I would like to briefly touch on a couple of points that have been made to see whether there is a response from the Minister; then I will have a broader canvas to paint a little later.

Firstly, in his second reading speech the Minister mentioned the fact that the Water Authority has been functioning only a short time and already changes are being introduced and a major review has started. It is always an incredible experience in this place to witness the rapidity with which amendments are made to legislation after very full attention has been given to it.

We should all be working towards a situation of less regulation and therefore less need for change. I know that advances are being made and that new ideas are being formulated. However, we seem to be the victims of many drafting changes.

I believe that the payment option which gives country people the same opportunities as city people is good. The Minister indicated that that was something he would have liked to introduce more quickly, but that legislation had to be drafted to enable that to be done. The creation of the examining board is another formality. I wonder at the requirement for persons constructing buildings to have plans examined by the Water Authority in the same way as local government because this is a further control measure. I think we should try to impose fewer control measures. We should be making it abundantly clear to officers that unless a real need is demonstrated, extra restrictions and

controls should not be brought to bear. If errors are made, heavy costs can be involved. I understand this.

I have received many queries from people in country areas, and some from the metropolitan region, relating to various anomalies in the rating system. Of course, when we are returned to office we will address many of these anomalies of increased charges and attack the cost structure of the Water Authority. Obviously that is a necessity and we make that commitment now. Firstly, we should be minimising regulation and, secondly, we should lower the costs where practicable. Only in that way can we reduce charges to a minimum.

Many people write to me asking for some sort of relief. However, we are not in the business of giving relief because we are in Opposition. We can indicate to the people who write to us that we will endeavour to reduce costs by ensuring many services are carried out more efficiently. The way this will be done is by allowing private enterprise to take over sections of the Water Authority's work. If costs are lowered, charges will be reduced. We will meet that challenge. Obviously, the Minister considers these points from time to time as problems confront him.

I received one complaint from Albany which stated that consumption levels were down by 16 units, but the average cost increased by 32 per cent. The indication was that the Government is pulling the wool over people's eyes. The Minister would be aware of the steep increases being experienced by many people because they would write to him initially. However, when they do not receive any response, they write to me and I have to accept their challenge. I have received complaints from Northam, Busselton, Esperance, Albany, and from all over the metropolitan area.

The Opposition has committed itself to a number of matters. We will ensure that the independent water boards are maintained. Some of the conditions that will be withdrawn will be the three per cent levy, the board's obligation to finance pensioner concessions to be able to defer rates and charges or to be able to pay one-half of them in full settlement, the unconditional and unrestricted discretionary power of the Minister to direct the boards in setting charges and creating reserves, and the obligation of the boards to provide high quality services as a statutory requirement even for the Water Authority of Western Australia's country water undertaking. Those conditions

will be withdrawn when we take office. We believe the independent boards should be encouraged.

The Minister and I have had considerable communication about the Westfield sewerage scheme 6A in the Kelmscott area. The local people are resisting the move. They fear that this will allow for a higher density of population in the area. They have also complained about the possible establishment of a medical centre in the middle of the residential area; I think it is an Aboriginal medical centre which will be established in Wandoo Street, Kelmscott. Many local people are upset also about the approval of deep sewerage in that area.

We have been through the situation of allowing people to have their say. The Minister went through the democratic process of seeking opinions from people. He received many replies with the majority being against the scheme. The Government supported the recommendations from the Health Department that the scheme should go ahead. I think the Minister's decision was somewhat swayed by his colleagues who have an interest in dense development in that area.

Another local issue which has been of considerable interest in recent times is the gazettal of the damming of Stinton Creek. People at a public meeting expressed strong objection to that development. A need for the damming of the creek has not been demonstrated to them. The guidelines for the development as explained to them brought fear and trepidation. They believe that they will be restricted in their farming activities and inhibited and disadvantaged by that development.

They have very forcibly expressed their resistance to the gazettal of the stream and the introduction of the guidelines. As shadow Minister for Water Resources, I have indicated to them that, with the change of Government, this gazettal would be withdrawn and the guidelines would not be proceeded with.

I suggest to the Minister that there be no haste at this time in proceeding with the guidelines for the Stinton Creek gazetted area. For my part, the Minister should not proceed until after the election is held so that, if there is a change of Government, at least there is an opportunity for those guidelines not to proceed and the people would not be put to any greater disadvantage, discomfort, or anxiety in the meantime.

The local people quite justly said, "If you want to harvest the water from our areas, you buy us out and pay us compensation." I think that is a reasonable proposition, and I would ask the Minister to delay any further action he might be contemplating concerning Stinton Creek at Karragullen and leave it until after the election. He would lose nothing, the local people would have a more tranquil Christmas, and would not be put to any more disadvantage. The Minister would not be inconvenienced because it will be many years before the creek will be dammed and, with the change of Government, the people could be relieved of the anxious time they are now experiencing.

I conclude my remarks by saying to the Minister once again that I appreciate the courtesy he showed by making the Committee notes available to me. The Opposition does not oppose the amendments proposed, and we therefore support the legislation.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [8.22 p.m.]: I want to make a few remarks because of the fairly long connection I have with the subject matter, both as Minister and as Opposition spokesman. Of course, I participated fairly hectically in the preparation and/or analysis of various pieces of legislation, both before the start of the amalgamation process of the department and the MWA and afterwards.

Despite the fact that the Bill's provisions are not only acceptable but, I think, commendable from the point of view of the Opposition, it is a pity—and I would like to place this on record—that it is yet another piece of legislation which is really a piecemeal solution and not the total solution. We have argued this out with the Minister on more than one occasion, and he is of the view that this is a better way than to wait and approach the whole situation at once. I do not think this sort of attitude has anything to do with party political affiliation because I have noticed that with the recently introduced planning commission legislation, where a commission has been appointed, that commission has been charged with preparing the relevant legislation in connection with the new Planning Commission, incorporating all the existing legislation as it is to be modernised or consolidated, and then reporting back. Based on that report, there would be a piece of legislation aimed at being introduced into the Parliament in, I think, 1987 so that the whole law pertaining to planning could be consolidated in one piece of legislation.

Personally I feel it would have been an infinitely better solution in the area of water and water-connected services if the same procedure had been followed; namely, that a fairly comprehensive committee or commission prepare all the necessary legislation and bring it down in one piece, instead of having the presently existing Acts very much amended and changed here and there, so that one must really be an artist—in the legal and the engineering sense—to find his way through the labyrinth of various amended pieces of legislation.

The interim measures contained in the Bill are almost without exception measures which were initiated and maintained during the time of the previous Government. One thing which pleases me particularly is the extension of the metropolitan system of paying rates and accounts, where the ratepayer may choose to pay in one, two, or four instalments. This pleases me particularly as I was the person who not only introduced this idea but really initiated it. I suggested it of my own volition and when it was first introduced the then Opposition—the present Government, and particularly the present Premier—bitterly attacked it as being a stupid system. However, the Government now not only maintains it but is extending it to the country, which I suppose is one of those unsung compliments which is never given on the merit of things at the time it is being introduced.

Mr Parker: That's politics.

MR MENSAROS: It is some sort of politics to which I never subscribe, although many people on both sides of the House do subscribe to it—I realise that.

As to the remaining provisions, the plumber's licence coordination is perfectly all right, and could be a little overdue, but it must be realised that when the country area water undertakings of the Public Works Department—as it was called at that time—and the Metropolitan Water Authority were different entities, even though the Minister was in charge of both, there were different heads of departments under various names, and there was a certain amount of jealousy between the two bodies. Each maintained that its provisions were better, and if that could not be proved, it was said that the conditions of each were better suited to the circumstances of either the country or the metropolitan area, whatever the case.

The keeping of rates information on a computer is, again, a natural development in these technological times, and is preferable to having manual rates books.

The provisions for building plans are quite commendable from the point of view of the building industry, because mistakes did happen. They are not theoretical mementos of mistakes that could happen, but they did indeed happen. When I had a construction business I encountered difficulties like this, and it was quite a lengthy process to establish the liability, which was not always decided according to the merit or equity of the case. Obviously, the position of the authorities was preferred by the law. Very often a builder or a client of the builder had to draw the shorter straw.

The interim values between the revaluations to apply for sewerage was also a plan which we would have introduced. It stands to reason that some sort of equity should apply here. However, this does not detract from the general inequity of the value-based systems which, I think the Minister agrees, are not equitable. However, it will take a long time and we could come down from the valuation system only if there were a very strong and bipartisan policy between the parties. Otherwise no political party would be able to make the sudden change from the present system of valuation to a more equitable system of pay-for-use and pay-for-service, as it is generally called.

I am reminded of another aspect which the Minister might take into consideration. I refer again to the inequities of the valuation-based system for non-residential premises. The allowance for water has been reduced from 100 per cent when we divide the base rate by the unit price of water. Those allowance reductions have gradually brought into the ambit of excess water many non-residential ratepayers. I cannot think of the new terminology used.

Mr Tonkin: Consumption beyond allowance.

Mr MENSAROS: Consumption beyond allowance is the terminology used. The reduction in the allowance meant that many people who previously did not come into this category because their original rate was very high now come into the category. Some non-residential premises have various shops or little manufacturing parts and are tenanted. As a result of this measure, the owner will be charged excess water for the whole of the premises. The authority refuses to install meters unless the owner pays for them. I feel that this is, for want of a

better word, cheating. It is almost the same as the Government saying that it fixes the interest rates for housing finance from banks, while the bank says that a person may have a loan provided the applicant takes part of that loan at a higher rate of interest. The bank will provide two-thirds of the required funds as a housing loan to the applicant provided that the applicant takes out a personal loan for the remaining one-third required. Therefore, the interest rates are increased without any law being broken. That is the case also with respect to water meters if the owner is required to install several meters.

This measure attempts to reduce the allowed consumption based on the original, value-based rate. This trend is perhaps more justified now in view of the differences between country and metropolitan areas. There is no allowance whatsoever in country areas; they pay for every drop of water consumed. Consequently, if the allowance is to be reduced more and more, the authority should take it on itself to provide the individual users with extra meters, not only but particularly in strata title situations. The SEC provides separate meters for a block of small shops or a block of residences without charging the owner of the premises for them.

With those comments, I support the Bill.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Tonkin (Minister for Water Resources).

CASINO CONTROL AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 23 October.

MR BRADSHAW (Murray-Wellington) [8.34 p.m.]: I rise on behalf of the Opposition to support this Bill. The Casino Control Act was brought in in 1984. It provided that a committee of four be set up to control the running of the casino. Obviously, it was necessary for this Casino Control Committee to appoint employees who would act as inspectors or otherwise control the running of the casino. Section 9 (1) of the Casino Control Act states—

The Committee may—

- (a) appoint a Chief Casino Officer and such casino inspectors and other officers, either full-time or part-time;
- (b) employ such temporary or casual employees; and
- (c) engage under contracts for services such professional or technical or other assistance,

Subsection (3) states—

The Public Service Act 1978 does not apply to or in relation to an officer or employee of the Committee.

In other words, that Act is specific and makes it clear that the Government intended that employees of the Casino Control Committee not be part of the Public Service.

The Bill before us today seeks to change section 9(3) of the Casino Control Act by making these employees a part of the Public Service. We would like to know why there has been this change of heart by the Government.

It could be that the Government believes that because of the degree of security provided under the Public Service Act these employees will not be subject to corruption. Personally, I cannot see why there would be any difference. If people are going to be corrupted, they will be whether or not they are employed under the Public Service Act. There is a little more security of employment under the Public Service Act, but people employed under that Act would still be open to corruption. A lot of money is involved in the casino climate. Obviously, it is possible that corrupt people will come into that arena. I would like the Minister to explain the Government's change of mind in view of the fact that the Casino Control Act was quite specific in its intention.

MR PEARCE (Armada—Minister for Education) [8.37 p.m.]: I thank the member for Murray-Wellington for his general support of the Bill on behalf of the Opposition. The question raised by the member was dealt with in the second reading speech.

When the Government first set up the casino control arrangements, it set them up on the basis that supervision of the operation of the casino would fall under the purview of the Totalisator Agency Board. People employed by the TAB are not public servants under the Public Service Act. Therefore, the employment arrangements for the inspectors would have been under the control of the TAB. That was provided in the Bill before the Legislative Council in the first place. Before the Council passed the Bill, it was amended so that the control of those people was changed from the TAB to an independent controlling authority consisting of four persons appointed by the Governor. That is a bureaucracy, a controlling agency, that is outside the purview of the TAB and outside the purview of the Public Service Act because the original Act had been written

to exclude inspectors from being public servants because they were to come under the control of the TAB.

Once the Council changed the Act in that particular, it should have made provision also for some other employing authority for the casino controlling inspectors. The Council neglected to do that. I have to say that is all of a piece with the way the Council amends bits of Bills without looking at the rest of them. Particularly in recent times, the Council has produced legislation which is something of a mess. One would wish that the Council would operate in a rather more responsible way and would at least take some advice on the *ad hoc* changes it makes late at night to many of these Bills to make sure the legislation will be coherent.

The Government has been forced to come back to Parliament time after time to make good the ravages of the Legislative Council. That is the case with regard to this legislation. Some arrangement has to be made for the employing authority of the casino control inspectors; the TAB employment arrangement, which was initially envisaged, is obviously no longer appropriate now that the TAB has no interest in this matter. Therefore the decision has been made to bring these people under the Public Service Act and make them public servants. That does not prevent the possibility of corruption at any absolute level, as recent cases involving people in Homeswest have shown only too well, but it does give a security of structure, employment, and supervision, which should help minimise the opportunity for corruption that would otherwise exist if these people were not subject to the supervision of a group like the Public Service Board.

Originally the Act went along a different line. The Legislative Council derailed that and now the Assembly—and I guess the Council too—is being asked to make good that original deviation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Pearce (Minister for Education), and passed.

RESERVE (No. 36636) REVESTMENT BILL*Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 17 October.

MR MacKINNON (Murdoch—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [8.43 p.m.]: This is a very small Bill of just one page, and its purpose is to ensure that a piece of land which now forms a part of Star Swamp and which is currently vested in the endowment trust is taken out of that trust and formally made a part of the Star Swamp reserve. The Opposition has no objection to that being the case.

The only query I have to which the Minister might respond in his reply is this: Why was it considered that the land should not be paid for by the Government? Why should the Government not recompense the trust for the land, bearing in mind it was vested in the trust in the first place? I understand that the trust has certain objectives and spends some money, as the Minister explained recently. I would have thought that the trust was rightly entitled either to compensation for the land or to use the land in the manner in which it was originally intended.

Besides that, the Opposition has no objection to the Bill and has much pleasure in supporting it.

MR CLARKO (Karrinyup) [8.44 p.m.]: Mr Speaker, Star Swamp is a favourite of mine, as you may know, because I took the first action ever to obtain the first land which led to the creation of Star Swamp. The creation of the reserve has been a fairly stormy thing ever since I first made the approach to the member for Narrogin, who then so conveniently was the Minister for Housing and for Conservation and Environment. As a result of my approach to him and my approaches to the local progress association, action was taken to create a reserve. In fact, the letter that came from the progress association—which letter to my chagrin these days is quoted as the start of things—was actually written by me, but all the history books incorrectly show that the first approach was the letter from the progress association. I keep reminding people every time I get the chance that I constructed the letter. One day in good non-Russian style, but with the observance of the Russian method of writing history, that will be corrected.

It is pleasing to see that the Government has played its part, although I gather the legislation is not of the Government's choosing. I understand the Government's desire was merely to

have this matter attended to in an administrative way, but found on advice that this was not possible. Hence we have the Bill before us.

I would appreciate hearing—if the Minister is in a position to tell me—what the situation is in regard to the other pieces of land which will make up the whole of Star Swamp. I understand there have been difficulties, particularly in regard to the old type of subdivision whereby roadways were set aside and other people acquired the remainder of the land—mainly governmental institutions—and the roadways were still left, in a very peculiar way, in the hands of those original owners.

That also was the problem throughout much of Scarborough and Doubleview, because those famous laneways which exist there—the old nightcart accessways—also remained in the hands of the original owners. When the City of Stirling used to be pressed by its ratepayers to clear up those laneways, the city would do a Pontius Pilate and say that it was not its land and it could not do the necessary work to make the laneways workable for the citizens of Scarborough and Doubleview.

This is an important step forward. I am keen to find out from the Government—it may not necessarily be the Minister for Planning who can tell me this—whether the Government still sees itself on track for all this land to be set aside as a single area before, say, the next State election. For my part, because there will be a change of Government soon, I do not want to have to take up the cudgels then and clean up any pieces of land not set aside.

I am a member of an advisory committee of the City of Stirling dealing with Star Swamp, as is Hon. Graham Edwards. The committee comprises representatives of the local community and people with a special interest in this matter, particularly the people who really carried a great deal of the battle—and I refer now to members of the Trigg, North Beach and Waterman Community Association. A few people there have really done an outstanding job for a community group. Also on the committee are environmentalists, people from Greening Australia, and from various Government departments. The committee meets regularly approximately once a month. We are anxiously awaiting advice from the Government as to whether it is in a final position to set aside, by way of an Act of Parliament—perhaps in the reserves Bill, which I expect is not very far away—all of the land so that it will be made available in the near future. One will then be

able to proceed further down the track of having Star Swamp used in the way so many people now wish it to be used.

The committee has discussed what would be the proper title for this land usage and some people have said we should use the terminology "conservation and recreation" or something similar. I am a bit wary of including simply "recreation" in the title and would prefer "passive recreation" because I understand that all those associated with this cause would not like to see football or similar sports played in the area as they could if the title were simply "recreation".

With those queries, I look forward to the prompt passage of this measure.

MR PEARCE (Armadale—Minister for Education) [8.50 p.m.]: I thank the Opposition for its support of this legislation. To answer the queries as I recall them, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked why the Government chose the path of not compensating the education endowment trust for the land which the Government is effectively resuming by this Bill to vest in the Star Swamp Reserve. The trust was set up initially with endowment land and other income, but basically land producing an income, to provide endowments to needy students. Until I became Minister the trust was doling out small sums of money—\$80 to \$100 at a time—to assist needy students with educational costs.

Unfortunately, cost pressures have led to two distinct trends: Firstly, a very small number of students were getting the endowment in terms of the total need; and secondly, the amount they were getting was quite negligible in terms of their particular needs. So the Government, as it is doing in the welfare area generally under the Minister for Community Services, took over responsibility of picking that up for needy students. We put a brake on what schools could charge and put the whole matter into the budgetary process so that the assistance to be given could be related directly to need and not just circumstances such as applied through the income of a trust of this kind with relatively fixed assets.

Once we did that the endowment trust no longer fulfilled its original role to make provision for students, and it has taken to giving money out to projects of public education which will benefit the children of the State generally and money has been given out in lump sums on that basis ever since. In those circumstances the Government felt that rather than

give \$5 million compensation to the trust when the Government had taken over the whole of the trust's activities a better use of the money was to resume the land and give it to the people of Western Australia as a reserve, and let the trust continue to operate in the same restricted area it operates with the land and funds still available to it. A number of changes have been made to the trust recently and I would expect some significant alteration in its direction in the days to come.

With regard to the queries of the member for Karrinyup, the Government does intend to create Star Swamp Reserve as an "A"-class reserve for purposes which would exclude the building of football ovals and the like; it will be left for conservation and passive recreation, so the member's desire in that regard will be carried out. I can understand his anxiety and that of many people in the area to have it locked up by legislation before the election because the people must be concerned a Liberal Government might get back and resort to the position it adopted before of reserving only a small part of the total reserve and of abandoning the commitment this Government has given.

Mr Clarko: The only broken promise was from your leader when he said he would set aside the whole lot and three times he did not.

Mr PEARCE: We have put aside the whole of the reserve. The previous Government originally set aside a couple of square inches, and subsequently about one-third of the whole area. The Opposition has never made a commitment since then.

Mr Clarko: The Leader of the Opposition made the commitment between the two occasions your leader said he would not make the whole lot available.

Mr PEARCE: We have taken action to do it. I do not want to overstress that point because I do not imagine the community in that area or anywhere else in that State thinks it will get a Liberal Government at the next election. It is the intention to legislate to make the swamp an "A"-class reserve when the Bill comes before the Parliament, but whether in this session or the next I cannot say. The Minister for Lands and Surveys may be able to advise on that.

Mr Blaikie: If you are going to bring in a reserves Bill you had better hurry.

Mr PEARCE: I am not going to bring it in; my colleague the Minister for Lands and Surveys may be intending to do so, but I think probably not before the next session.

Mr Clarko: That would be a major blow to the people if that is the case because they have been led to believe it would be cleaned up this year.

Mr PEARCE: I can hardly see it will be a major blow when we are clearly legislating to transfer status of the control of this land from the trust. It is part of our commitment.

As regards the additional land and roadways, because the other land was under control of the Government agencies like Homeswest and the Department of Lands and Surveys where the Government could change the status of the land to a reserve without having to go through the business of resumption by law—

Mr Clarko: It is not simple. That is why you are taking the time.

Mr PEARCE: It is simple if it is covered in a reserves Bill. Nothing will be done in that area between now and the time it is legislated in the Bill. It is available for the people. If we were to resume the education endowment trust land we would have to pay the trust compensation in the same way we would have to pay a private owner. I am not well placed to advise the House of the timing of the reserves Bill. When it comes the move of Star Swamp to an "A"-class reserve will be in it. If members want to ask the Minister for Lands and Surveys about the timing I am sure he will be pleased to answer the queries. I appreciate the support of the House for this proposition.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr Burkett in the Chair); Mr Pearce (Minister for Education) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3: Reserve No. 36636 at North Beach—

Mr CLARKO: It is unfortunate that even when I adopt my softest style the Minister for Planning thinks I am attacking him. I am not; I am saying to him in regard to this particular land that the people who are associated with this project of Star Swamp will be extremely disappointed if they find the reserves Bill this year does not include all the relevant land being transferred to Star Swamp reserve. Many of them wear the same political coloured shirt as the Minister. I say that not by way of attack, but they are very concerned about the matter. They had been led to believe that only the

roadways I mentioned a moment ago would be stumbling blocks preventing the land being made available.

It should be realised by everybody, and the Minister would agree, that this piece of legislation merely reverts the land to the Crown; it does not place it into Star Swamp. The next step will be a reserves Bill which will take this land and other land and place it within the Star Swamp reserve. The Minister said it is the Government's intention that football will not be played on the reserve. We have been discussing this matter for many months this year on the City of Stirling advisory committee where certain people have been pressuring us to adopt the term "recreation" rather than "passive recreation" because they believe it is a wider usage and gives greater opportunities to use the land whichever way is wanted. I moved a motion at the committee's last meeting that the terminology be "passive recreation" because the majority of our committee and the people in the district want to ensure it cannot go to a wider usage.

If, at some time in the distant future, there is a need to widen its usage then let us come back to Parliament and change it. We would rather have the usage narrowed so it is basically for the purposes of keeping it in as near a pristine state as we can manage, because much of that land has regrown. You, Sir, Mr Acting Chairman (Mr Burkett), are peculiarly placed to take a keen interest because you were strongly supportive of this matter when you were Mayor of the City of Stirling. That is very much appreciated by me and all those involved in the Star Swamp project.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN (Mr Burkett): And what you are saying is the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Mr CLARKO: I would ask the Minister for Planning to interact with his colleagues in the Cabinet to try to speed up this process to see whether it is possible for the reserves Bill to include these separate pieces of Government land, so they can be taken together and put into the reserve we are all hoping for.

I say to the Minister very seriously that if this does not happen and the matter is left floating, there will be much disquiet among people in the community. The Minister for Planning made a comment about what his Government has done. He knows the truth is that the Premier stated in unequivocal terms before the last election that he would make available all the undeveloped land in the section between

Hope Street and Marmion Avenue, and Beach Road and North Beach Road. Subsequently, when in Government, on three occasions the Premier made a statement that all the land would not be made available. That situation was later rectified. During the period when the Government went back on its promise, I am pleased to say that the Leader of the Opposition visited that area and made the statement that the Opposition was committed to setting aside the whole area if the Government did not do so.

The Opposition is not trying to take away from the Government the credit it deserves for what it has done with respect to that matter, but the Government's passage down the track did include a couple of side and back steps on the way. I am not trying to belt the Government about the ears, but it was not as simple as some might say. It is quite wrong to suggest that only a couple of centimetres had been agreed to be set aside before because an area approaching half the area, had it been agreed to be set aside, it had to be formalised. This Bill does not formalise it. It is merely a step towards doing so. Just as the Government was critical of the Opposition by saying that it did not finish the job off, it had agreed in Cabinet that the land should be set aside up to the amount I have described. The Government has not set aside one grain of sand. In truth, that will still be the position even when this legislation is passed. We desperately wait on the reserves Bill to set up Star Swamp.

Mr PEARCE: I do not think we should delay the Chamber over this argument. The Government has acted to reserve the Star Swamp area and this legislation is part of it. The Opposition was in Government for nine years. I appreciate the fact that the Government has not brought in the reserves Bill, but this is a necessary step for the setting aside of the whole of Star Swamp as a reserve—a necessary step that the Opposition never took in all the time it was in Government.

I do not wish to question the credibility of the Leader of the Opposition except to say that the Opposition is generally finding it a lot easier, while in Opposition, to promise things that it could not perform while in Government. That is the case with respect to a whole range of activities. On the one hand, the Leader of the Opposition pops up in public and keeps on about what cutbacks will be made on spending, whereas every shadow Minister is roaring around the countryside promising immense quantities of money to people for all sorts of

things. An amount of \$60 million has been promised to the Agaton water scheme. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has been promising schools and extensions to everyone.

Mr MacKinnon: I did not promise a new school.

Mr PEARCE: The member promised a new high school at Pinjarra. The people at Pinjarra, who have been promised a new high school, will not be too impressed by this discussion. The Opposition is working on the oldest trick in the political book. On the one hand the Opposition intends to cut back on taxes and incomes, and on the other hand it intends to increase expenditure vastly.

We are moving here to get land under Government control so Star Swamp can be vested as a reserve. I do not wish to put the member for Karrinyup off his attendance at the City of Stirling committee meetings, but the City of Stirling is basically irrelevant to the Government's operation in this area because it will not have a say one way or another about the way in which Star Swamp is used, vested, or reserved. It is a decision that will be taken by the Government. In fact, it has already been taken by the Government when the Cabinet acceded to the proposition I put to it many moons ago on the basis that Star Swamp would stay as it is; that is to say, an untouched mini Kings Park in the northern corridor. The member for Karrinyup can debate endlessly with his political mates at the City of Stirling as to whether the reserve will be for recreation or passive recreation.

The Government has decided that Star Swamp will be left as it is in its pristine and natural state, and vested in a way which will not allow the City of Stirling to put in a high-rise building or a football stadium, if left to its own devices in that particular area. Those decisions have been made quite firmly by the Government. When the reserves Bill comes to the House, those decisions will be given the solidity of law. I do not know when the reserves Bill will come to the Parliament, as that is not my area. It is up to the Minister for Lands and Surveys to make that decision. If members wish to ask him I am sure he will be pleased to provide that information.

Clause put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr Pearce (Minister for Planning), and transmitted to the Council.

LOAN BILL*Second Reading*

Debate resumed from 23 October.

MR HASSELL (Cottesloe—Leader of the Opposition) [9.09 p.m.]: This Bill, amongst other things, seeks authority to provide the raising of loans not exceeding \$90 million. In those circumstances one would expect that the person who introduced the Bill would be here to handle it. I notice the Treasurer is not here, and presumably he will not be here to handle the General Loan Fund Bill either. That is quite disgraceful.

Mr Tonkin: We are only bringing it on to suit you. We have four other pieces of legislation. Are you going to whinge every time you get up?

MR HASSELL: One of the other pieces of legislation referred to is the Superannuation and Family Benefits Amendment Bill, which is also one of the Treasurer's Bills.

Mr Tonkin: That is not what I am referring to at all. I will read them out to you. They are the Oil Refinery Industry (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company Limited) Amendment Bill, the Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Amendment Bill, the Collie Coal (Western Collieries) Amendment Bill, the Adoption of Children Amendment Bill, and the Acts Amendment (Meat Industry) Bill. We have put off five Bills to suit you. Now, whinge some more!

MR HASSELL: The fact is that the Treasurer should be here to deal with this Bill.

Mr Tonkin: Sit down and we will go back to the other Bills.

MR HASSELL: He should be here to deal with it.

Mr Tonkin: You are a whinger.

MR HASSELL: It is no good the Leader of the House getting upset.

Mr Tonkin: I am not upset.

MR HASSELL: The Leader of the House is acting in a most irrational way. I point out to the Leader of the House that of the five Bills, three fall within the responsibility of a member who is away because he is ill. That is a pretty legitimate reason to be away. However, we are now dealing with two Bills which are important

pieces of legislation, both an essential part of the Budget, and the Treasurer of the State is not here to deal with them.

I wish to raise two issues in my general remarks on this Bill. The first item to which I wish to refer is the attitude of the Premier in question time today. The questions asked of the Premier were proper questions and he avoided answering them. The questions related to the relationship of this Government to a couple of people who have been publicly identified as having been involved in an activity which was the subject of an investigation by the WA Turf Club some years ago. That investigation resulted in those people being warned off the course.

Mr Taylor: It happened 13 years ago.

Mr Court: Was that in the member for Kalgoorlie's electorate?

MR HASSELL: It was partly in his electorate. Those issues have been considered relevant to be raised in a public inquiry in relation to a television licence and put on the record of that public inquiry. Therefore, it is a very proper and appropriate question to ask whether those issues were ever considered by the Government of this State when, through the personal activities of the Premier, special relationships were established by the Premier with those people.

I asked the Premier tonight whether he was aware of those matters at the time the special relationship was established. If he took the view of the member for Kalgoorlie that these issues happened 13 years ago and that, therefore, he is completely innocent and has forgotten, the Premier could have replied that he did know about the matters but that he had decided that they were not relevant to the special relationships which he had established with those two people. He could simply have said that he took them into account but that he was not going to let them make any difference to his conduct.

Mr Hodge: You are assuming that all these allegations are true, aren't you?

MR HASSELL: The allegations were true; they have not been denied. The Turf Club found the matter was factual.

Mr Pearce: Can matters from the Turf Club be referred to the High Court.

MR HASSELL: Yes. If the proper procedures are not followed, an appeal can be made to the courts.

I asked the Premier, who has been engaging in a very special relationship with these people, who might properly be described as his cronies, whether he was aware of those facts at the time he established those relationships. He sought to avoid those questions today. I think the questions were proper questions for the Opposition to ask of a Government.

Mr Hodge: This is disgusting; it is muck-raking.

Mr HASSELL: The Minister thinks it is disgusting to raise these matters when the Government has special deals and when the Premier of this State appears on a special radio programme, not from time to time in the normal course of events, but through a special deal with Mr Maumill of 6PR. The programme is a weekly one and it is jointly promoted by the Premier, and the commentator. Not only does the Premier do that, but also he has a personal relationship with this man Maumill as well as sharing the ownership of a racehorse with him.

The fact that the man who became an adviser to the Government has been used by the Premier on two occasions has been admitted to by the Premier.

Mr Taylor: He also used Keith Gale.

Mr HASSELL: That is relevant in the case of Keith Gale. I asked the Premier whether those factors had been considered by the Government before it made the decisions to involve the Government of this State with those people and to involve the Government in contractual arrangements with one and in a radio programme with the other. Those are totally legitimate questions to ask. The Premier could have responded as he did on other occasions in relation to Mr Gale by saying, if he was so minded, "Yes, we considered those matters but we decided that we were going to go on anyway." He could have said that if he wanted to take that stance.

The Premier has sought to avoid the questions and the issues. Instead, he has sought to focus attention on aspects of the television licence application hearing which was not the issue raised.

Several members interjected.

Mr Tonkin: We would introduce legislation for the declaration of pecuniary interests, but every time you vote against it because you are scared of who pays you.

Mr Court: The Premier refuses to answer the questions.

Mr HASSELL: Indeed, the Premier does refuse to answer questions in this House. He refuses to answer questions which are legitimate questions as to the activities of the Government.

Mr Hodge: You are muck-raking.

Mr HASSELL: Let the Minister for Health accuse me of being a muck-raker as much as he likes. Is the Minister for Health suggesting it is not the duty of the Parliament to examine the relationships between the Government and the people outside the Parliament?

Mr Hodge: You are indulging in character assassination at the behest of other people.

Mr HASSELL: I have not indulged in character assassination at all. The Minister for Health can try to suggest that every time a question is raised in this House we are indulging in character assassination, but I raised this matter with the Premier and I have never raised it in the Parliament before; that is, the question of the relationship of this Government with people who have been named in a public inquiry and who have been reported in the public arena, and whether the Premier was aware of those situations at the time he made those arrangements.

That is the question the Premier has refused to answer.

Mr Tonkin: I would be sensitive if I was prepared to do anything for money.

Mr HASSELL: That is what the Premier has sought to avoid.

Mr Tonkin: You hire yourself out to the highest bidder.

Mr Court: Your party has spent millions of dollars on its election campaign.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I was hoping that the Leader of the Opposition's members might constrain themselves. The Leader of the Opposition has the call.

Withdrawal of Remark.

Mr HASSELL: Mr Speaker, the statements made by the Leader of the House in his attack upon me are contrary to the Standing Orders and I ask that they be withdrawn.

The SPEAKER: My attention was distracted by the member for Nedlands and I did not hear the remarks to which the Leader of the Opposition refers. I cannot ask for them to be withdrawn, if I did not hear them.

Debate Resumed

Mr HASSELL: I will not repeat the remarks for the satisfaction of the Leader of the House.

Let me point out to the Leader of the House and to the members of the Government that we heard the beginnings of this little campaign which is now being pursued by the Leader of the House in question time tonight, with all kinds of innuendoes and all kinds of subtle attacks on all kinds of people being made by the Premier.

I point out to the Leader of the House that if he has any allegation to make of that kind he should make it outside the House.

Mr Tonkin: We will both go outside the House now and you can say what you have been saying inside the House.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House will remain silent. The Leader of the Opposition will finish his speech more quickly if there are no interjections.

Mr HASSELL: I give an assurance that if the Leader of the House says any of the things he has been saying in the House tonight outside it, within 24 hours he will receive a writ and that writ will be pursued to a conclusion in the courts. That is my answer to the Leader of the House: If he wants to say those things outside the House he will, within 24 hours, receive a writ from me and that writ will be pursued to a hearing.

What the Leader of the House has said is absolutely untrue in every respect. I do not have to worry about what he has said because it is absolutely without foundation. I will not have him saying it—

Mr Tonkin: Whose bidding are you doing tonight?

Mr HASSELL: —and getting away with it.

Mr Court: He is doing the bidding for the people of this State.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think it is becoming patently obvious that the interjections are helping the Leader of the Opposition to make his speech.

Mr HASSELL: The fact of the matter is that proper questions have been raised in this Parliament tonight about the relationship of this Government with people who have been named in a public inquiry and those questions have been avoided by the Premier who has declined to answer them or to deal with them.

I have raised nothing in this House tonight that is not on the public record and was not an established fact. I made no allegations that were not well established, apparently long ago. I asked the Premier a simple question about whether he was aware of these things when he made these special arrangements with Mr Connell and Mr Maumill and he should answer to this Parliament. That is the proper function of Parliament; that is the proper role of Parliament, and that is the proper examination to which a Government should be subjected. The Premier refused to answer the question.

The Premier's refusal to answer the question is indicative—

Mr Tonkin: He answered it very well and that is what you do not like.

Mr HASSELL: Perhaps the Leader of the House would like to repeat the answer.

Mr Tonkin: Read *Hansard*. I am not the mouthpiece of the Premier.

Several members interjected.

Mr HASSELL: The Leader of the House is floundering in the absence of the Premier who should be in the House now and who should have been able to answer the questions put to him during question time tonight, but which he avoided.

I want to refer to another matter; that is, the massive programme of advertising being undertaken by the Government at the expense of taxpayers in its desperate bid to regain office. One of the most unsuccessful aspects of this advertising campaign has, undoubtedly, been the letter about land tax. The letter which has been sent out about land tax assessments has been brought to the attention of members of the Opposition. There has been a flood of complaints. It has also been brought to the attention of *The West Australian* newspaper which received such a flood of letters to the editor that it has to print them in the form of an article.

The letter is from the Office of Premier, Department of Premier and Cabinet and it was undoubtedly prepared, produced, and distributed at the expense of taxpayers. It reads as follows—

Dear Taxpayer,

The Government has reduced your 1985-86 land tax bill by 10 per cent.

There is a similar cut in the metropolitan region improvement tax.

Members can imagine the anger that letter has caused to many people who have received increased land tax bills.

Those people are voluble in their complaints. I have here a land tax assessment dated 17 October 1984 for \$515.50. A land tax assessment for 18 October 1985 for the same land is \$547.65. That is but one example of a very small increase. I have a whole stack of other assessments brought to me by different people who are horrified by the fact that they have received these huge increases in their land tax assessments and yet the Government has had the gall to write them a letter to tell them that their land tax assessment has been reduced. If ever an advertising programme backfired on the perpetrators, it was this advertising programme. Not only does the Government stand condemned for having used taxpayers' money to put out this propaganda, but also it stands condemned for having done it when the reality is that the people who received the letters are in many cases receiving notices of higher land tax. Is it any wonder that these people are complaining bitterly about their land tax.

If we trace through the increase in collections of land tax, the root cause can be found. In 1981-82 land tax collections were \$29.5 million. In 1982-83 land tax collections were \$35 million. It went from that figure to collections of \$42.5 million in 1983-84 and in 1984-85 it increased to \$49.75 million. It is estimated to increase to \$54 million in 1985-86. That represents a very substantial increase in land tax collections for the period of this Government—a jump from \$35 million to \$54 million. If that is calculated in percentage terms, it can be seen very simply and clearly how large an increase it is.

Earlier in the year the Government introduced a measure to bring about its so-called reduction of 10 per cent. At the time the Opposition said that the reduction would not cope with the problem, and indeed it has not. The actual increase in collections of land tax over that very short period has been substantial. When we talked about the Budget last year the Treasurer argued that those increases in land tax were natural growth. He said that he was not responsible for the increases in land tax; they were a result of natural growth and the growth in collections occurred because of an increase in valuations, etc. That is true in a technical sense, but it is true also

that the Government has control of the natural growth. It is true that the Government is entitled to set the rates.

Earlier this year the Government conceded that it had control of the natural growth by introducing legislation which resulted in the land tax rebate being put in place; a rebate which is now being claimed as part of the State Government's Budget, although it was done many months ago.

A realistic assessment of the total collections of land tax should have been made and a real reduction made in the rate, if the Government was dinkum about doing something on the issue of land tax. Obviously it could not abolish all the taxes of the State in one year and I would not suggest that. However, in this Budget it failed to do anything about the issue of land tax which was raging months ago and is raging now. It is raging for reasons which are so very obvious if one looks at page 4 of the financial statements for 1985-86. It can be seen that in the three Budgets of this Government, land tax collections have risen from \$35 million to \$54 million. It is obvious that many people are paying that massive increase and they are reacting to it. If we take away the inflation factor over that period, the increase is still very high indeed.

Of course, all of it comes from the increase in valuations. That could be dealt with by lowering the rate if the Government wanted to reduce the overall level of collections. However, it did not want to do that, beyond the 10 per cent concession it made. It was quite foolish of the Government, when it made the concession, to write to everybody telling them that there was a concession because people were receiving bills which were, in many cases, substantially higher than the previous bills they had received.

The land tax problem, which the Treasurer is trumpeting about in his advertising letter, is a problem which the Government has not dealt with at all; it has not gone away and the Government has not provided the significant measure of relief it should have provided.

As previously indicated, the revenue condition of this Budget would have allowed the Government to get rid of one or more taxes completely. Instead, it chose to nibble around the edge of a number of taxes. Although all relief measures will be welcomed by those who receive the benefit of them, people paying land tax have not received a real concession. It has been a reduction in the rate of increase, and the

rate of increase after the concession of \$49.75 million to \$54 million is quite substantially above the Government's estimate of the rate of inflation. It will continue to create an unhappy public feeling with the Government and in a political sense the more the Premier writes letters like this, the better it is for the Opposition because he is making people angry as they realise how they are being duped by the Government.

I had hoped that the Minister for Minerals and Energy would stay in the House long enough for me to deal with the third issue which I wished to raise in his presence. I must deal with it anyway because the opportunity this debate presents should be taken.

In question time tonight the Minister for Minerals and Energy sought to answer the matter which I raised in a grievance debate last week about Marvel Petroleum NL, which, in association with three other companies, was refused a petroleum exploration permit for the Canning Basin of Western Australia, permit designated L76-29. The company made a bona fide application in the form of a joint venture. It has been acknowledged that it is a small Western Australian company. It is a company which put itself into a joint venture situation so that it would be able to make a genuine application.

It made a genuine application, but when that application was considered the Minister instead granted the permit in favour of Amoco, a foreign-owned company. The essential point I raised in the grievance debate was that the Government should have sought to help the local group. The Government should have given the local group a chance; it should have been predisposed towards it, but instead it left at least one member of that group—namely, Marvel Petroleum NL—feeling frustrated and bitter about its treatment. I raised this matter in a genuine way in the House and, frankly, I did not think the Minister's answer was adequate.

Mr Parker: What was it about the answer you did not like?

Mr HASSELL: Amoco was granted permits covering 28 000 square kilometres on a 100 per cent basis in May 1985. Might it not have been a reasonable proposition for the local joint venture group to have been given a go?

Mr Parker: Didn't you hear the answers I gave you about the differences in the programme they put forward? That programme was vastly superior.

Mr HASSELL: Yes, it is also my understanding that the local group was prepared to make a commitment to actually undertake drilling within two years, whereas Amoco has not made such a commitment until after the expiration of two years, and in accordance with the answer which the Minister gave to question 1263, Amoco can, in fact, surrender the exploration programme after two years and not go on with it. I asked the Minister—

Is it a fact that in relation to a petroleum exploration permit a party to whom a permit is granted has the option to withdraw from proceeding with exploration after two years?

The Minister replied—

Yes, provided that at the time of surrender, the exploration programme for the party is in good standing. This means it will have fulfilled its commitments up to that time.

I was informed of the other members of the local joint venture of which Marvel Petroleum NL was a part—this matter was raised with me by Marvel itself and not on behalf of the other members of the joint venture; I made that point clear in the grievance debate—so that I had the full story.

Mr Parker: I think you should talk to the member for Narrogin or the member for Floreat to find out a bit about regional geology and why it might be that firms may need contiguous blocks for their exploration activity in order to make a proper assessment of the area and to find out the difference between a programme which involves very deep wells and the expenditure of \$10 million over its life, and one which involves the expenditure of \$5 million as proposed by the other parties, with all the professional advice from the Mines Department indicating that the Amoco project was the better project. All those matters I talked about this afternoon. I am aware that the Leader of the Opposition knows nothing about them from his own personal knowledge, but if he does not believe me he should talk to his colleagues and find out exactly how these things operate.

Mr HASSELL: It might come as a surprise for the Minister to be advised that I do know a little about them. I did not raise with him the technicality of whether—

Mr Parker: It is the technicality on which an assessment is made.

Mr HASSELL: Just a moment. It was not in regard to the technicality of precisely those issues, but the policy issue of whether, when a proper and genuine proposal is put forward by a local group, it should be given an opportunity, if it is possible to do that. If the Minister wants to take his argument to a logical conclusion about favouring those who are from outside the State because they can put forward—

Mr Parker: I never said anything of the sort. That is a complete misrepresentation.

Mr HASSELL: —a programme that superficially looks more attractive—

Mr Parker: It is not a question of superficially looking more attractive; it is more attractive.

Mr HASSELL: —there will be no Western Australian or no Australian participation. These small companies will always be able to be beaten by the Amocos of this world.

Mr Parker: It shows your ignorance of these matters.

Mr HASSELL: The Minister can speak later in the debate. I point out to him that the company itself has disputed all the things that he says. I do not have access to the files as the Minister does. I do not have the advice that he has. However, the company concerned approached me and put forward what seemed to me to be a very reasonable case.

Mr Parker: It is interesting that it decided to go to you.

Mr HASSELL: It got nowhere in going to the Minister.

Mr Parker: It didn't come to me.

Mr HASSELL: It did go to the Minister. It went to the Minister with an application and the Minister directed it to try to do a deal with Amoco.

Mr Parker: And I directed Amoco to try to do a deal with it.

Mr HASSELL: After several months of negotiation Amoco withdrew from those negotiations.

Mr Parker: I got correspondence from them.

Mr HASSELL: I have correspondence too.

Mr Parker: The correspondence indicated that both parties withdrew.

Mr HASSELL: I also have correspondence which indicates that this company is not the only one which was dissatisfied with what went on. These people put up what appears to have

been a pretty reasonable proposition. They have a deep sense of injustice about the way they were treated.

Mr Parker: Without any justification.

Mr HASSELL: The Minister is totally unsympathetic to them.

Mr Parker: Every loser does not like losing.

Mr HASSELL: When we consider the extent of the grants of adjoining permits on a 100 per cent basis to Amoco amounting to 28 000 square kilometres, it would not have been unreasonable in the circumstances to have given some support to the local group provided it was genuine and bona fide, and prepared and able to enter into proper commitments for exploration.

Mr Parker interjected.

Mr HASSELL: I do not think the Minister is entitled to take that stance when the application was made on the basis of a joint venture.

Mr Parker: But Marvel itself or as a member of the joint venture was not able to do it.

Mr HASSELL: I do not believe the Minister has given a completely satisfactory answer. He should be prepared to examine his attitude to the whole situation.

Mr Parker: I will take up the whole of question time and I will go over the entire detail from beginning to end, if that is what you want.

Mr HASSELL: I can only tell the Minister that these people have a genuine grievance about the way they were treated.

Mr Parker: No-one likes being No. 2. No-one likes not winning. Amoco came out with a better programme.

Mr Court: Do you not think it would be better to support one that is perhaps not as good, but which at least gives the local guys a chance?

Mr Parker: I tried to do that. That is why I directed not just Marvel but also Amoco to negotiate on the matter. According to the correspondence both parties indicated that in the final analysis they could not reach agreement. We then had to make a decision based on what was best. If I had done it the other way around you would have been attacking me for not giving the permit to the people who were going to do the most exploration work for Western Australia.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the Leader of the Opposition want to have a bit of a say here? Should I make some leeway for him to be able to start speaking now?

Mr HASSELL: I was waiting for an opportunity to resume my speech.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I well imagined the Leader of the Opposition would have been.

Mr HASSELL: I really only wanted to raise this matter again because I do not think that the Minister has approached the matter sympathetically or in an understanding way. He has been very aggressive about it.

Mr Parker: You said in your debate that I had a close association with Amoco.

Mr HASSELL: The Minister has misinterpreted that. I did not say that he had an improper association with Amoco.

Mr Parker: I have no association with Amoco.

Mr HASSELL: I did not say he had an improper association with Amoco; I said he had a close association with it. I do not know whether the Minister and the Government are feeling guilty about all the associations that they have, but they are certainly pretty touchy when the mention of a close association with a major company that is spending a lot of money here is interpreted as an allegation of an improper association. I did not say that the Minister had an improper association. If I had wanted to say that I would have said it, and I do not think the Minister needed to interpret my comments in that way.

Once again, for the benefit of members, this map shows very clearly and dramatically the vastness of the area that has been granted to Amoco, and the relatively small area that was sought by this group of people, including Marvel Petroleum, and the fact that this area has fallen to Amoco as well. I am not saying that Amoco was not worthy of that, that it has not done a good job, or that it has not put up a good application, but I am saying that this local group has raised a genuine grievance in a genuine way. The Minister has not satisfied me by his remarks so far that he really gave the sort of consideration to the issue that it ought to have been given. The simple issue that I have raised is whether we want to see Western Australian companies and expertise developed, and see Western Australian capital put to work in this way.

I do not think that the Minister has given an adequate answer. It would not be a bad idea for him to approach the matter with a little more sympathy for the genuineness of the issue that has been raised, instead of simply trying to score points.

Mr Parker interjected

Mr HASSELL: The company wrote to the Minister applying, and it followed the application through in the proper way. I might tell the Minister that one or two companies have written to the Minister as well. I have copies of those letters. They do not show that the Minister really wanted to take up the fundamental issue, which is whether he is going to give the local people a reasonable opportunity provided that he is not disadvantaging the genuine and proper interests of the State.

I am not suggesting that local companies should be mollicoddled, nor am I suggesting that they should be entitled to trade in this area or anything of that nature, or that they should be entitled to put up programmes which are not effective exploration programmes. I take a pretty hard line myself on the requirement that people who take on these exploration obligations should fulfil them. It is my understanding that the company was in a position to do so and that it undertook to do so, and in some respects its application was better in terms of the timing and the commitment than Amoco's application. That was the basis upon which it was brought forward.

I am sorry that the Minister does not seem to be sympathetic to that, and I want to point out to him that this issue is just the tip of the iceberg. Many other companies are not prepared to go public, are not prepared to have their names used, or to put themselves at risk in relation to other proposals because they feel that if they do so they will be discriminated against by this Government. I put to the Minister very clearly what has been said to me recently about this very issue. I have been told that when the Liberals were in Government the rules were very tough and the companies did not like them. They were critical of the rules, but they knew what they were. Now the companies say they do not know what the rules are and nobody else does either. The Government ducks and darts all over the place and there is not a consistency of rules and there is not a consistency of satisfaction.

Mr Court: You want to be very careful having confidential talks with the Premier.

Mr HASSELL: Nobody has confidential talks with the Premier—we know that. I can testify to that. I think on two occasions since I became Leader of the Opposition I have had private meetings with the Premier and in respect of both of them—and the meetings were both completely open and proper in every way—the

subject matter of those meetings was raised in the House by the Premier. That is why I avoid like the plague seeking out those meetings now.

I think that the whole business of Government in Parliament could have been better conducted if there had been a better relationship between the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier. I regret that I have the feeling that I cannot approach the Premier on a proper basis.

Mr Court: The business community must feel the same way too.

Mr HASSELL: The business community feels very much the same way.

Mr Tonkin: Rubbish. That is why you are in trouble now—because you have not got the confidence of business.

Mr HASSELL: I support the Loan Bill.

MR MENSAROS (Floreat) [9.56 p.m.]: I am glad to use this opportunity to deal with the budgetary system in general, but in particular in connection with what we used to call the General Loan Fund or Loan Budget.

It appears to me—and I think it is public knowledge—that those who go, and not even very deeply, into the method of how the Budget is prepared from year to year, will discover that despite the fact that the Premier appears to be so proud and tries whenever he can to advertise that he is a good housekeeper and a good economic manager, he does not support his statements with the facts. To submit to the House that he is a good housekeeper and not to submit the Budget and, in particular, capital expenditure to the scrutiny of this House is inconsistent. If the Premier really were the best economic manager, I suppose it would stand to reason that he would be proud to display this economic management prowess.

For various reasons, we, as a Parliament, have no automatic opportunity to discuss, to argue about in detail, or to criticise if necessary, overwhelmingly large sections of the Government's investment programme, either directly or indirectly. It is commendable that the Government issued the Budget papers and that there has been great detail with the capital investments, but when one looks at this one notices that most of it is just reported, but not subject to our scrutiny. If we were to want to scrutinise these investments in detail, when it comes to the economic expenditure of the General Loan Fund, there might be little expenditure which is directly related to the vote and therefore little which can be discussed in Parliament. It is purely a one-sided report and is not subject to scrutiny or to discussion in Par-

liament. Of course Parliament is the only check on the Government and if we in this place fail with this trend, not only in relation to the Loan Bill, but also in relation to the revenue Budget, we will finish up with a situation in which the Parliament will have virtually no say in the Budget at all.

If the Budget is to be accepted it will only reduce the ability to have a general debate which I am trying to participate in now. As I said, both in regard to the General Loan Fund and the Consolidated Revenue Fund the matters for discussion are decreasing.

If members look at one of the Budget papers in connection with the General Loan Fund they will realise that the total capital Budget is \$1 200 million and out of that amount only \$165 million—13.75 per cent of the outlay—is eligible for parliamentary scrutiny and detailed debate. This amount does not take into consideration those amounts which directly flow to the Main Roads Department from the Commonwealth Government and the fairly large field of tertiary education.

I am not accusing the Government because this procedure was not introduced during its time in office. However, I accuse the Government of accelerating the progress towards this trend; that is, that Parliament should have fewer opportunities to discuss these matters.

We have always had Government instrumentalities, but the number of semi-Governmental entities has proliferated under this Government. Consequently, the borrowings which are the vehicle of financing capital works are now more and more in proportion, outside the General Loan Fund and, therefore, outside the scrutiny of this Parliament. There are more external borrowings, and of course, this is something which has been deliberately devised by the Government in order that the loan funds which were spread, if not equally, to a wide range of departments, are now contracted towards housing. Very little money is left for anything else. And the remainder, which used to be partially financed by the General Loan Fund, is now financed by outside borrowings. In order to do this, the Government undertook all sorts of interesting exercises which did not receive any public interest and which were never described publicly in the media or anywhere else.

Members must be aware that Government departments are not entitled, according to Loan Council rules, to borrow money outside the General Loan Fund. What did the Govern-

ment do with what used to be the Public Works Department, which was one of the biggest spenders of the Government Loan Fund and which attracted the most debate in this place? Every member was interested in the public buildings in his electorate, be they hospitals, schools, prisons, or some local community buildings which needed repairs. The entire budget of the Public Works Department, which was a department under the Public Service Act, was dealt with in the General Loan Fund Bill and members had the opportunity to debate matters of interest to them during the Committee stage.

If members have read the Budget papers they will realise that none of the Public Works Department public buildings is included in the GLF and, therefore, is not subject to the scrutiny of Parliament. What has happened without virtually anyone noticing it—although I made a speech about a year ago on this matter which went absolutely unnoticed—is that the Government set up the Western Australian Building Authority.

Mr Hassell: Are you referring to the Building Management Authority?

Mr MENSAROS: The Leader of the Opposition has just raised a matter which I am trying to explain. I am not referring to the Building Management Authority, but to the Western Australian Building Authority, which is entirely different. I am sure that not even the officers or clerks of the Parliament knew about this authority.

The Western Australian Building Authority was created in order to have a Government instrumentality which has no board, chairman, members, or staff. It equals the Minister. Legally, it is a body corporate and it can legally borrow money outside the General Loan Fund and on the private market as long as it does not exceed the Loan Council's aggregate sum for State borrowing.

Once it has borrowed this money it gives it to the Building Management Authority which is a department within the Public Service Act and which spends money in the same way as the State Energy Commission, the Water Authority of Western Australia, and Westrail spend money—without it being incorporated in the Budget. Those instrumentalities do not have GLF allocations for their capital funds and neither do they have revenue funds.

Mr Parker: Their Budget expenditure is still required to be within the Loan Council's aggregate.

Mr MENSAROS: They can borrow within the Loan Council's aggregate, but it is not subject to the scrutiny of Parliament.

I refer again to the Western Australian Building Authority. I asked questions about this authority because few people knew about it. Apparently the Department of Premier and Cabinet which prepares the notice for the *Government Gazette* which details the ministerial responsibilities, and which Acts of Parliament and instrumentalities are the responsibility of individual Ministers, omitted the Western Australian Building Authority from this list. I asked many questions about it. The first question I asked was corrected by the officers or clerks of this Parliament. When I referred to the Western Australian Building Authority they changed it to read the Building Management Authority. They did not know that it existed and they thought I had made a mistake. I did not make a mistake because I knew what I was asking. I was trying to find out why the Building Authority was not mentioned in the *Government Gazette*. I asked three or four questions of the Premier and in his usual manner of answering questions he gave an answer to something completely different. He finally said, "Yes, the Minister for Works is responsible for the Building Authority." I knew that was correct because I handled the legislation and criticised it, but the information had not been included in the *Government Gazette* or in the booklet prepared for the information of members. The Premier has not admitted that his department omitted to include this department in its advertising, but said that I should know that the Minister for Works is responsible for it.

This is one example in which the Government has artificially established an instrumentality to borrow money outside the General Loan Fund in order to conduct its business without the scrutiny of Parliament.

The Treasurer is quite proud of this fact. If he were a good manager, which he claims to be, he should be proud of it and should not be afraid of any scrutiny by this Parliament.

The Treasurer is proud of the fact that his new instrumentalities have nothing to do with the Government and, therefore, by implication, nothing to do with the Parliament. I refer to some questions which were asked by the member for Narrogin. This particular question was directed to the Minister for Minerals and Energy. The member asked what benefits the Government considered would result from the

Government's equity as one of the partners of the Robe River iron ore project. His question was connected with the investment by the Western Australian Development Corporation in the project. The answer from the Minister followed the same line as all the Premier's answers. He said that the member appeared to be referring to an investment made by the Western Australian Development Corporation and that the member would be well aware that the investment policy of that corporation is determined by its board members. That is perfectly true. We know that it is true. But it signifies that the Government is proud that taxpayers' money is being utilised and that decisions about taxpayers' money are being made by an outside body which has nothing to do with the Government or the Parliament. It virtually asks what Opposition members are arguing about or jumping up and down about. The Government intimates that it does not have to answer such questions because the decisions are made by an entirely independent board.

The board is, of course, independent to the extent that the Government appoints its members and ultimately it uses taxpayers' money. If this trend continues we will either have to give up our system of parliamentary democracy as we have known it for a long time or, in some way or another, alter the method by which Parliament works. In the United Kingdom Parliament, for instance, much more work is done by committees. It must be remembered, of course, that membership of the UK Parliament is now about 650 and it is quite plain that in Committees of the whole House matters could not be dealt with in such a large Parliament. However, in our almost mini-Parliament by comparison with Westminster, we should be able, in the Committee of the whole House, to apply such scrutiny. Otherwise, we will have to strengthen the Public Accounts Committee so that it has the means and the members to examine the business of these Government instrumentalities and utilities. If we take into account their revenue and capital expenditure we find that they spend more of the taxpayers' money—money from the taxpayers, ratepayers, customers; it does not matter, they are all citizens of Western Australia—than does the Government with its normal traditional budgetary methods.

I pointed out not long ago that even from the figures given in the Budget, it can be seen that expenditure outside parliamentary scrutiny is about 86.25 per cent as against 13.75 per cent

of funds drawn from the General Loan Fund. The same principle applies in the revenue field. I have not attempted to find out the statistics with respect to revenue, but when we consider the revenue requirements of the largest Government instrumentalities and utilities like the SEC, the Water Authority of Western Australia and the Government railways, we realise that their ongoing expenditure, which would normally be recorded on a profit and loss sheet, is very quickly approaching the aggregate expenditure of the Government itself. I think it will not be very long before they exceed the expenditure dealt with in the Estimates of Expenditure of the General Loan Fund.

Nobody can claim that such a level of expenditure is all right because they are independent instrumentalities and utilities that should not come under parliamentary scrutiny. There might be some logic in this argument if these instrumentalities were really independent, but as they developed their structure became less and less independent. Whatever Government created such utilities endeavoured to shed responsibility but soon realised that it could not do so because if there was public criticism of the behaviour of the then Water Board or the electricity undertaking, ultimately the Parliament and the Government were blamed.

Originally, these instrumentalities were, according to their Statutes, "subject to the Minister" only. Even that expression was interpreted to mean that the Minister had power over them. Then much stronger provisions were written into the Statutes to enable the Minister to have absolute power over them. Since the Minister can tell them what to do, they are not independent instrumentalities any more, despite the fact that they have a board and a chairman and bring down all the resolutions. The Minister with a word can issue an instruction about what they are going to do. As we have experienced with Governments of all political persuasions, that happens when it comes to the structuring of charges because that structure is one of the most hotly contested political matters as it affects the hip pockets of the citizens and electors in the State. Unless the philosophy in Western Australia changes to approach that which applies in the United States, for instance, where people do not have at the back of their minds that the telephone company has to be Government-owned—because it never was—or that the railways or the buses must be Government-owned and that therefore the fares that they have to pay cannot be blamed on the Government,

where people do not have at the back of their minds that the electricity utility must be Government-owned—

Mr Parker: Except there was a great insistence in America about where the bodies were Government-owned—because, of course, some of them were Government-owned—but where they were not and even in some cases where they were owned by Federal, local or State Governments and some by the private sector, the public through pressure on its politicians in the United States obtained scrutiny of the charge structures of those bodies.

Mr MENSAROS: Precisely. I wanted to come to this. This was the line of my argument. Even though they are privately-owned in the United States, partly through the method of franchise, which is mostly provided for by State legislation under which they work, and partly because of public pressure, they are virtually subject to more scrutiny than our Government-owned utilities and instrumentalities. This is precisely the argument I am trying to develop. I am saying that unless people have a different philosophy, the Government here cannot get away from the fact that not only is it legally responsible for and can direct these utilities, but also it is perceived by the people that that is so in practice. Thus there is no way the Government can get away from this. Therefore, it is not correct that these utilities should be allowed to escape entirely from parliamentary scrutiny.

A Government sitting on the Treasury bench for a period of only three years would regard this as good for it; but there could come a time when any Government realised this method could work against it. Some of the utilities are going to conduct the business in a way which will not always do exactly what is in the Government's interest or what the Government wants it to do. It takes a fairly smart Minister to realise that all the time and in every field.

I have mentioned that the charges are the subject of direct Government scrutiny. However, in connection with the charges, one could say that there are many ways of skinning a cat and the Government's intention—particularly in the short term—is unfortunately as it has been proven to be not quite achieved; that is, that the charge increases should be minimal because that is a political bonus for the Government. That might be so, but the way the Government achieves this is detrimental to the

utility and ultimately—in the long term—if it is not a genuine charging system, it is detrimental to the consumers of the utility which, in the case of electricity and water, almost encompasses the whole electorate. There might be many electors who do not pay tax, particularly in our welfare state, but there are mighty few who do not pay money to at least one of these utilities.

One of the methods of determining lesser charges than the economic necessity of that utility dictates would be simply to postpone the evil day and say "All right, we will budget for a loss and we might bring it in some time in the future, either next year or the year after, or after election year." It is an irresponsible attitude but one notices it just in reading the Budget papers themselves.

There is, either in parallel or alternatively, another method in relation to capital investment, where allowance is not made for enough capital investment which would be necessary for the conducting of the healthy business of that utility. Alternatively, the capital investment can be postponed. Again, alternatively or in parallel, one could postpone the maintenance of the capital assets. That has often been done when a Government wanted to save money, but particularly where it had to cover the expenditure from the charges and did not want to raise the charges. Again, this is an irresponsible solution because ultimately somebody must suffer for it.

I would like to mention another method which is tremendously important and has been realised as such. It is where the Government, instead of trying to achieve, if not 100 per cent, then a very large proportion of self-financing—which, of course, means that instead of borrowing for the capital expenditure, it sets aside moneys to cover the capital expenditure—instead of doing this, it lets it loose again.

I suggest this is the difference between a responsible Government which is really administering, and a Government which is not responsible but only looks at the present-day favours of its constituents. That is precisely the example we have now.

Several members interjected.

Mr MENSAROS: That is another argument. This is what the Government was so proud about, showing examples and tables indicating that the charges were increased more during the period of the Liberal Government. They might have been, although the proper compari-

son would be more on real terms and also on the real and proper demand of this utility and how much investment it needs to conduct its business properly and to conduct it in the future. Apart from this, our Government's aim—at least in the Water Authority where I was in charge in the last three years; and to some extent in the power authority as well, although I was not able to follow that—and my aim in particular was to go over to self-financing as much as possible. In times of high interest rates—which we had during our term of Government and which we now have again—this is very much in the interests of the consumers. It can be argued that to some extent it is in the interests of future generations, but generally we always do that. If people have families and children they always do that to some extent, and it solves the problem almost every time.

I will try to give the House an example, for which I do not have a table, but it is easy to follow. Let us assume that servicing of a loan—borrowed for capital expenditure—costs 20 per cent a year. I know that is exaggerated today, but during my administration there were times when one had to pay 17 or 18 per cent plus the procuration fees, plus the various fees to stockbrokers who launched a larger borrowing because at that time the utilities were able to do it separately; and I still think, that is better than doing it together in the State because some healthy competition is necessary. Ours is the only one, no others do it.

Mr Parker: They still do it.

Mr MENSAROS: The SEC does have the right to raise its loans; the others do not. The Water Authority at one stage was not able to write out a cheque for \$5—it had to go to the Treasury. The teller at the desk could not write a cheque for a pensioner who was due for a rebate.

But in this case the calculations are very simple. If one needs 100 units every year for capital expenditure and the servicing of that amount costs 20 per cent, then in the first year, to get this 100 units it costs 20, and the next year it costs 40 because one has to pay for the previous year and this year. In the fifth year it costs 100. In the sixth year it costs 120 and from then on it costs ever more, having borrowed the money and having serviced the loan, quite apart from the repayments, which is another problem.

Taking this into consideration, members will realise that apart from the first five years it is infinitely cheaper to go over to self-financing, which means that one sets aside money in one way or another, and because the utilities are business-like entities and have a bookkeeping system similar to business bookkeeping, they call it depreciation. For instance, the Metropolitan Water Authority embarked on a very laudable programme of depreciation under my administration. It decided, firstly, to take the replacement value as opposed to the historical value, and secondly, to increase the rate of depreciation by one quarter of a per cent each year as long as it reached the two per cent. That would have enabled it to do a large proportion of capital works with self-financing, albeit with somewhat higher charges than would otherwise have been necessary. That is the reason for our higher charges. It is nonsense to talk about bad administration of one Government or another. Everything has a reason, except that we treat the public as absolutely non-understanding people and feed them something as a reason which is non-existent.

That was the reason that perhaps some of the charges were higher—we wanted to take care of the future very responsibly, perhaps absolutely unselfishly, because it did not suit our immediate interests but would have suited the public interests at large, and particularly in the future. But this Government irresponsibly threw this away because it did not follow it up. It used a different method. The biggest outlay, to give one example of the Metropolitan Water Authority, was the Point Peron sewerage outlet.

Incidentally, that project was vocally and absolutely criticised in the worst words imaginable at the time by the member for Rockingham and other ALP members, but now they see it as an absolute achievement. That is politics, according to the Minister for Minerals and Energy, but I call it a lack of character.

To return to my subject, however, that was the biggest capital outlay ever made by the Water Authority. It did not start to appreciate that originally because it said that it was only new. That was one fiddle where it was possible to charge less appreciation. It is possible to charge lower rates, which is good politically but which is utterly irresponsible from the point of view of proper management. Everyone knows it can be done. We are not talking about entities that are looking at the minimisation of taxation, but at entities which must look at the whole State as a constituency.

To do what the Minister for Minerals and Energy suggests is to mortgage the future and, in the long term, to disadvantage the consumers—and we can call them the shareholders, because they are almost one and the same. They are disadvantaged over the long term because a Government wants to gain a political advantage in the short term by claiming that it charges less.

The SEC is in a better position because it has a charging system which is generally accepted, something which the Water Authority does not have. The Water Authority has a value-based charging system, a system which both sides of Parliament agree is wrong but which they do not change because it would be very disadvantageous politically to change. No Government would support a change unless it was absolutely a bipartisan policy, which it really is because we all say that it is better to charge for the services and the usage. We cannot implement change even slowly because politically it would not be popular. Unfortunately the conduct of business here depends on short-term political advantages.

I do not think we conduct a very responsible business. The proceedings in this House are not generally in line with proper democratic principles, and I am referring again to the main theme of my comments, which I know go unnoticed but at least will be recorded in *Hansard*. Ours is not the proper democratic way to handle the State's Budget, with both its revenue and capital outlay outside the scrutiny of Parliament. This is what I have wanted to bring to the attention of the House at least by way of having it recorded.

MR COURT (Nedlands) [10.34 p.m.]: I take the opportunity during debate on the Loan Bill to mention a number of subjects of concern to me. On the Notice Paper we have two Loan Bills—this one and the Appropriation (General Loan Fund) Bill. I believe the Parliament—certainly the Government—tends to take these Bills very casually. The Treasurer is not going to be here while this Bill is debated.

Mr Gordon Hill: Where is the Leader of the Opposition? The Treasurer has commitments too.

Mr COURT: All members of Parliament are busy. The point I make is that these Loan Bills are very important because the financing of Government and its programmes is big business. That is what these Loan Bills are all

about. They are part of the process of getting the funds to enable the Government to carry on its functions.

I think we all agree that Governments are spending too much money and becoming too big. This Government and the Federal Government see taxpayers as a bottomless pit. They believe they can hock this country to the stage where it will be very difficult for our children to repay the level of borrowings that we seem so easily to spend. We all know it is very easy to borrow money. Anyone who wants to buy a car will find people willing to lend the money. But it is hard to repay it. We should never lose sight of the fact that all these moneys we are borrowing must be repaid.

We have all witnessed the sad and sorry state of countries such as Argentina, which have borrowed excessively over the years and have since declined dramatically. At the turn of the century both Argentina and Australia had similar high standards of living. Argentina's standard of living has dropped dramatically and now we see Australia's standard of living also dropping dramatically, and a lot of this is a result of living beyond our means.

When we discuss these Loan Bills it is also important to understand just what these funds are to be spent on. In many cases the funds can be spent on very productive projects, on different infrastructures and the like, which will help create more wealth in years to come. Funds can also be wasted, and I intend to comment on a number of areas of incorrect expenditure.

A part of this Loan Bill involves the reappropriating of loan funds that were put aside from one purpose to another. In this case about \$5 million is going across mainly to the Marine and Harbours Department and we are seeing a lot of funds being spent on America's Cup activities. The Federal Government has been quite generous in its funding programme and it is here that we have missed the boat in some areas and not taken advantage of the proper usage of those loan funds. The point I want to make relates to harbour facilities constructed at Fremantle.

This is a case where the funds concerned—and considerable expenditure has been required to build the new marina there—could have been better spent in providing facilities not only for the pleasure boats where they are now, but also for the fishing industry.

Last year I was fortunate enough to go to Brazil, travelling with one of my colleagues. Just by coincidence in a hotel in Rio an engineering convention was taking place. It was an international convention, and a chap came up to us in the lobby and asked whether we were from Western Australia. He identified us because we had the Western Australian flag on our luggage. He said he had been here to do a job and had a look at the facilities proposed to be built at Fremantle for the America's Cup. He specialised in building fishing harbours for Governments in many different countries. He said that as he saw it we had a prime opportunity for a Government to use the excuse of the America's Cup to upgrade our fishing facilities.

I was of the opinion that our fishing facilities at Fremantle were very good and something we could be proud of. We have a big fishing harbour there, not dissimilar to the fishing facilities at Geraldton. This man explained to us how the fishing industry has become very professional and many changes have taken place in recent years, and that we were behind the times with our facilities. He explained there was a trend to bigger and bigger vessels which required not only bigger ports but also bigger lifting facilities and better wharf facilities such as freezers and more space, tying in with the processing facilities. He convinced us that what we had at Fremantle was good a few years ago but would not take us into the future with an efficient fishing industry.

I could see we had a good opportunity. That sort of infrastructure costs a lot of money to build, and I think it would be a wise use of funds, particularly as the Commonwealth Government is prepared to assist, if the facilities being built there could cater for a large-scale expansion of not only the fishing industry, but also other commercially related industries. The member for Fremantle would know only too well that over the years a considerable service industry has built up around Fremantle which services vessels doing the Rottneest run and others involved in offshore exploration and production. Generally more and more work vessels such as barges and cranes have been coming in. They must be kept somewhere, and the existing facilities are inadequate. There is not the space to operate those vessels from Fremantle.

I thought an imaginative Government would have made better use of the funds being made available to build facilities which in the short term would have helped the cause at hand—the

America's Cup—but in the longer term would have encouraged two industries to expand, the fishing industry and those service industries related to the maritime industry.

We are in a part of the world where we have a pretty captive market when it comes to ships in trouble which have to pull in here. That leads me to another point, and that is the question of building ship-lifting facilities to enable us to attract larger vessels. When the facilities in the fishing harbour were extended a few years ago good lifting facilities, capable of taking vessels such as the fast ferries on the Rottneest run which are 100-odd feet in length were put in, but those facilities are not big enough to handle the bigger trawlers.

Mr Parker: They are not Government facilities; you are talking about private facilities.

Mr COURT: Yes, I am saying that when the recent expansion took place those facilities were put in by the private sector. The private sector would not be able to fund a harbour large enough to do what I am talking about and give the private sector space to provide bigger facilities for those two industries.

We have heard a lot lately about this submarine project and going along with it could be a ship-lifting device to take vessels up to 10 000 or 15 000 tonnes. That is something I fully support. I mentioned it in this House a couple of weeks ago. I would like to see our small ship-building industry at Cockburn Sound, which is doing a tremendous job and winning a lot of export orders, assisted by the Government using the excuse of the defence budget funds to build that type of lifting facility which could be used by defence-related industries and the commercial shipbuilders.

We have heard a lot about defence spending and the fact that we want to see more of it in this State. I could not agree more. One thing that worries me is that we have a Federal Government which runs a huge deficit and a large part of its spending programmes is related to defence purposes, and as we all know Western Australia does not get its fair share of the action. We have tended to wait for the Department of Defence to come out with its requirements and say what it wants to purchase. The most recent order we have been trying to win is the contract for the submarine project. Again I have made it clear that the Opposition will do everything it can to assist in making sure that Western Australia wins a large part of that contract.

We have to look further ahead than that and be in a position where we are working with the Department of Defence so we know in advance the type of project the department wants to work up, and the research and development work it is doing, and get in on the ground floor so that when the Government makes a decision to build a new minesweeper, for example, we have the facilities available so that we can build the vessels.

Our shipbuilding industry in Cockburn Sound has proved it can build special trawlers and sell them internationally. We should start looking in the defence area to find the niches in the marketplace where the Australian Government wants to buy certain vessels which we can also export to other countries.

If one has a specialty product, particularly one which is unique, one gets in at the ground floor level. I can recall some years back when I was in Queensland visiting some small shipbuilders there that the Australian Government was trying to find a manufacturer for a new catamaran minesweeper. That is a unique boat, yet the Department of Defence could not find a manufacturer in Australia to build it. That would have been a great opportunity for Western Australian industry to realise that it was a unique product and that it had a big market, not only in Australia, but also overseas.

I realise that I have been critical in some of the areas in which the funds have been expended. However, I do not mind Government expenditure going to areas which provide infrastructure for industries to expand in the future.

These days we have big spending Governments, and particularly big spending Labor Governments, State and Federal, with deficits running at record high levels. That has a detrimental effect on interest rates.

Mr Pearce: What do you mean? We have never had a deficit as a State Labor Government. We will have a surplus this year and the Federal Government is cutting back its deficit.

Mr COURT: The Federal deficit is running at a record level. The Federal Labor Government forced the deficit up to record levels and the State Government took part in spending some of that money. This Government cannot deny its responsibilities.

Mr Gordon Hill: Get your facts straight.

Mr COURT: My facts are quite straight.

Mr Pearce: You're interpretation is crooked.

Mr COURT: The Federal Government has been running record high deficits with huge increases of expenditure.

Mr Parker: I admit that John Stone is not the most reliable man in the country but, according to John Stone, the deficit was running at \$9.6 million when the Labor Government came to office.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The interjections should not come quite so quickly or as thick. If they came one at a time with a small space in between the member for Nedlands could have a little say.

Mr COURT: Members opposite cannot deny the fact that we are experiencing record high interest rates, the highest real interest rates since the 1930s. Real interest rates have rarely been as high as they are now. It is a very real problem. Members opposite know only too well the political ramifications of these continuing high levels of interest rates, and their effect particularly on the housing industry, business circles, and on the rural sector which is going through a hard time at the moment.

What does one do about trying to reduce interest rates? The decisions to be made have to be hard and tough decisions. I think the member for East Melville gave a very good summation of the current economic policies of the Federal Government and how those policies are resulting in the continuing high levels of interest rates. That Government has to make the bold decision to try to cut the level of the deficit.

Mr Taylor: You have to tell us where it has to cut back.

Mr COURT: I do not think tonight is the right time for me to detail how we, on the State scene, could cut the levels of Government expenditure. On the one hand, the Government criticises our policies connected with Government expenditure, but on the other, whenever we mention the word "privatisation", members opposite start jumping up and down.

Mr Parker: Privatisation will not reduce the size of the deficit.

Mr COURT: The Treasurer has to be a bit careful. The sale of land estimates came to about \$23 million this year.

Mr MacKinnon: That figure does not include the figure for Homeswest which came in at about \$30 million.

Mr COURT: That is right.

Mr Parker: You must agree—with a privatisation policy, it is not possible to cut down levels of Government expenditure.

Mr COURT: That is not so.

Mr Parker: Mrs Thatcher did not cut the levels of Government expenditure with her privatisation policy. She set capital up against the expenditure of the United Kingdom and thereby reduced the number of taxes she had to raise to cover the expenditure. However, that is called funding capital expenditure by selling off other assets. There has been a lot of criticism about what Mrs Thatcher did from within her own party. She has done the worst possible thing in selling off the assets and not using them.

Mr COURT: I am talking about the high levels of interest rates and what has to be done to try to control the situation.

The other problem, of course, is that inflationary pressures have to be reduced. The major problem on which all economic commentators agree, is that under our current wage system, we cannot take advantage of the recent devaluation of the dollar. I made it clear in my comments the other day that Australian industry must become more competitive internationally. We have the crazy situation where, after quite a substantial devaluation of the Australian dollar, theoretically Australian manufacturers should have been able to pick up a larger share of the market for their manufactured goods. They should have been able to be more competitive with imported products. Unfortunately, the statistics do not show that and I think that is sad. It shows that we are simply prepared to pay a higher price for the imported products. That concerns me because I would not like to think that our industries have got to the stage where they cannot produce. I am concerned that improvement in our manufacturing industries has not shown up more quickly.

I realise that there are long-term changes, but some other factors are occurring at the same time which will make it very difficult for these manufacturers to get their act together to be able to compete with imported products. The car industry, for example, is a major manufacturing industry in this country. We have to consider the effect of the tax package and the fringe benefits taxes which now have to be paid by the employers.

Mr Parker: But the car industry is one of our fastest growing in exports.

Mr COURT: Let us consider the effect on the car industry of this fringe benefits tax. It will change the way in which companies buy fleet vehicles. The trend will be similar to that which occurred in New Zealand. The types of cars that were hit there happened to be those cars—the Falcon and Commodore type cars—that are produced in Australia. The trend has been to a smaller vehicle which, within our industry, happens to be the type of vehicle which is imported. So we have this added factor harming manufacturing industry in this country. That is certainly of concern because that section of the Australian industry which should be competitive has been knocked around by the recent tax package.

Another matter to be considered with respect to making our industries competitive and getting them into the international marketplace is that of export grants which are given by the Federal Government. On the one hand, State and Federal Governments have said that business has to export more. We all agree. We cannot continue to rely upon our major industries of mining and agriculture. We have been riding on them for too long and we are currently in a world situation of declining commodity prices so those industries are under pressure.

We all agree that we have to get our act together in the export field. The Federal Government has decided to change the way it will hand out its export grants. It said that there had been abuse of the system and that some companies had taken advantage of the way these grants could be obtained. Thus the grants were seen not to be creating the desired effect of promoting exports as much as they could have.

I agree that there were some problems with the system and that some companies took advantage of it. Surely the system could have been changed in a different way and the smaller companies could still have been given the incentive to try to break into the export business. Instead, the Government lifted the bottom level of the expenses that a company had to incur before it could make any claims. Thus, it has effectively cut out most of the small businesses that are trying to break into the export markets, which is a very expensive exercise.

The Singapore-Malaysia area is probably one of the cheapest markets to break into. It costs a small fortune in air fares and accommodation in taking a few trips there to build up contacts and get products on display. Small companies need assistance; they have to start somewhere.

They are the companies least able to afford the jump into exports, and yet they have had their grants taken away from them. They are no longer eligible for grants unless they reach a certain level of expenditure.

There must be a way for the system of export grants to be tied to a company's export performance. This would lead to a situation where in the early years when a company is moving into the export business and its expenses are very high, it would receive the necessary encouragement. The changes that have been made to the system chop out export possibilities for the small producers. That is a very backward step for a country in which politicians, both in State Parliaments and the Federal Parliament, are continually telling people that they must export more.

My next point refers again to the recent tax package, and, in particular, to the problems that the restaurant industry is having in that regard. Several weeks ago a motion before this House called on the Government to support us in expressing our concern about the tax package and the effect it would have on a wide range of industries. One industry on which the tax package has had a very quick impact is the restaurant industry.

Some weeks ago members opposite seemed to support the Keating tax package. It was not until after it came into effect and its detrimental effects began that they started to back-track a little. The Premier now says that he is concerned about this part of the package and that part of the package. He is now saying that perhaps 50 per cent of entertainment expenses should be allowable as taxation deductions. The Government could have predicted what was going to happen to the restaurant industry. The restaurant industry itself made very clear to members of the Parliament and to the Federal Parliament what effect the tax would have on the industry. The sad thing is that the effect was immediate. It happened overnight and people in the restaurant industry were knocked around. When they came up to the Parliament they had a petition for the Government. There was no-one from the Government to receive that petition. I went out and received it because I knew just how those people felt.

When I spoke to the people who marched up to Parliament House, I found it interesting that the ones affected were not only restaurant owners. All those people connected with the restaurant industry, the suppliers of food, wine, and paper napkins, were also affected.

A month or so after that part of the tax package has come into effect, members opposite are starting to say publicly in their electorates that they understand that there are problems and that perhaps the tax is not a good one. The member for Fremantle, the Minister for Minerals and Energy (Mr David Parker), was quoted in the *Fremantle Focus* in October this year. There are two David Parkers in Fremantle now. I have to be careful which one I quote.

Mr Parker: Who is the other one?

Mr COURT: The other one is the President of the WAIT Liberal Club.

Mr Laurance: Let us hear what he had to say.

Mr COURT: Which one does the member want?

Mr Laurance: The good one.

Mr COURT: The member for Fremantle now realises that there are problems with the industry. Talking about the capital gains tax, he said that the claims by the other David Parker who said that the new capital gains tax would destroy incentive for small businessmen and damage our resources industry were rubbish. The member for Fremantle now realises that in his electorate alone many restaurants have felt the effects of the tax package. The restaurateurs in that area who have made representations to us have shown immediate declines in their sales of 40 per cent to 50 per cent. They might start building up again slowly over a year or so—I certainly hope that they will start building up next year when the place is full of tourists—but the immediate effect in that industry has been a shedding of labour.

The restaurants have also seen their profitability decline and if that is the way members opposite support the small business sector they will have a tough time in the year ahead.

The Federal Government should recognise the problems which have arisen in that industry. The Federal Treasurer, Mr Keating, is quoted in tonight's paper as saying that the Government will persevere with its tax package and he has made some strong attacks on American Express which got together a group

of people as a lobby group to explain to the Government the problems that have arisen. The Government is reported as having said that American Express is a foreign company and what right does it have to criticise the Australian Government? It is one of the service industries associated with the hospitality and tourist trade and if it is operating in Australia as an Australian company it has as much right as anyone to be concerned about the situation.

A great deal of damage has been done but, with the support of the State Government, the Federal Government should try to rectify the situation immediately. We cannot allow an industry as important as this to suffer. It is a large industry which epitomises the free enterprise system by the way it operates. It is totally unfair that it should be placed in this situation.

In conclusion, I have some concern about the high level of Government borrowings and the way in which taxpayers should be protected from the severe fluctuations in the level of the Australian dollar. As many loans are coming from overseas sources, I hope that the necessary safeguards are in place to ensure that taxpayers do not carry hefty losses as a result of the fluctuations in the Australian dollar. Some large corporations in Australia have incurred massive losses over the last year as a result of the decrease in the value of the Australian dollar. I hope that the Government bodies which are borrowing extensively overseas have instituted safeguards to protect themselves and also that proper accounting practices will indicate any losses that have been incurred.

I have placed a question on notice asking what has occurred in this connection in the past year for various Government bodies. I have already received one answer that the SEC has lost approximately \$700 000 on foreign exchange. That is an important matter. Any losses incurred must be identified and Parliament must be informed of them.

The Australian dollar is moving quite violently against currencies other than the US dollar. It is important that profits or losses incurred on these exchange movements are brought to the attention of this Parliament and that we do not have to dig to get the information. Parliament should be informed on these matters. In the private sector, CSR particularly was badly hurt this year. I hope the

necessary safeguards are in place to ensure that taxpayers are protected from major losses as a result of currency fluctuations.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Tonkin (Leader of the House).

IRON ORE (DAMPIER MINING COMPANY LIMITED) AGREEMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR PARKER (Fremantle—Minister for Minerals and Energy) [11.16 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to ratify an amendment agreement dated 29 October 1985 between the State and Broken Hill Proprietary Minerals Limited.

The amendment agreement gives effect to arrangements sanctioned by the Government between that company and Cliffs Robe River Iron Associates for the continued production of iron ore by Cliffs from a defined area within mineral lease 254SA, held by BHP Minerals.

During 1978 BHP Minerals, in accordance with the provisions of the Iron Ore (Dampier Mining Company Limited) Agreement Act 1969 and an agreement known as the "companies agreement", subleased to Cliffs "deposit N" within the company's mineral lease 254SA, an area known as Eastern Deepdale. This subleased area contained about 150 million tonnes of ore.

It is estimated that Cliffs will exhaust the known ore reserves of "deposit N" in the early 1990s at the current rate of extraction of about 15 million tonnes a year. Cliffs had hoped to develop its West Angelas deposits in the central Hamersley Ranges well before "deposit N" was depleted and the company directed considerable effort to that end. However, under the prevailing market conditions such a large new project cannot be justified.

For this reason Cliffs has negotiated with BHP Minerals for access, by way of a further sublease, to iron ore from areas adjoining "deposit N" within mineral lease 254SA and known as areas "J" and "K". The agreement between the two companies is called the "second companies agreement". Marketable reserves of 300 million tonnes of iron ore within areas "J" and "K" are referred to in the second companies agreement. This will provide Cliffs with at least 15 years of additional operation beyond 1992 at an anticipated mining

rate of about 18 million tonnes per annum. Within this additional time Cliffs should be able to develop the West Angelas deposits.

The ore reserves within the sublease area could however increase as exploration proceeds.

The amendments contained in the amendment agreement are of a minor nature. Access to additional reserves will however provide major economic benefits to Cliffs by enabling it to continue to mine ore deposits close to existing infrastructure. More importantly Cliffs will have a greater ability to demonstrate to overseas markets that it can meet long-term sales contracts.

I turn now to the specific provisions of the amendment agreement scheduled to the Bill before the House. Clause 4 (1) of the amendment agreement provides that, in addition to the sublease to Cliffs dated 27 February 1978, BHP Minerals may, on terms to be approved by the Minister, sublet to Cliffs Robe River Iron Associates the area described as coloured green on the plan marked "X".

I now table the amendment agreement plan marked "X" together with plan "A" which will serve to show the House the proposed sublease area in relation to mineral lease 254SA and the Pannawonica townsite.

(See paper No. 245.)

Mr PARKER: In clause 4 (2) of the amendment agreement, clause 5 of the principal agreement is varied to provide that any proposal submitted by Cliffs for an extension of the existing spur railway will be submitted to BHP Minerals for clearance prior to the Minister's formal approval or rejection of such a proposal. This provision has been included to reflect BHP Minerals 50 per cent ownership of the existing railway.

Clause 12 of the principal agreement is amended to provide that any breach by BHP Minerals of the "companies agreement" made the 30th day of September 1969 including the amendments subsequently made to that agreement and the "second companies agreement" dated the 28th day of October 1985 may be regarded as a breach of the Iron ore (Dampier Mining Company Limited) agreement.

The amendment agreement I believe deserves the support of Parliament and I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr MacKinnon (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).

IRON ORE (CLEVELAND-CLIFFS) AGREEMENT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR PARKER (Fremantle—Minister for Minerals and Energy) [11.20 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to ratify an amendment agreement dated 29 October 1985 between the State and the participants to the Cliffs project.

This amendment agreement reflects the provisions contained in the Iron Ore (Dampier Mining Company Limited) Agreement Act Amendment Bill. The House will be aware of the background which was provided when presenting that Bill a moment ago, hence it will not be repeated.

Amendments contained in this Bill are, as with the Dampier amendment, of a minor nature but as with that amendment will have major long-term economic benefits to both Cliffs and the State.

Unlike the earlier BHP Minerals sublease to Cliffs International Inc., the sublease of areas "J" and "K" within mineral lease 254SA will be to Cliffs Robe River Iron Associates.

Clause 6(1) of the amendment agreement serves to add to the principal agreement a definition for "CRRIA" and to recognise that the areas subleased to Cliffs by BHP Minerals will fall within the agreement definition of "mineral lease".

Under clause 6(2) of the amendment agreement a new subclause 8(L)(H) has been provided to deal with the subletting of areas "J" and "K" by BHP Minerals to the company. It also provides that if mineral lease 254SA should be terminated for any reason, the State will grant a lease to CRRIA direct for the unexpired term of the sublease to protect Cliffs' interest in and rights to the iron ore within the sublease.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr MacKinnon (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).

2. Electoral Amendment Bill.

Bills returned from the Council with amendments.

BILLS (2): RETURNED

1. Criminal Injuries Compensation Bill.

House adjourned at 11.23 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1232 and 1270. *Postponed.*

TRANSPORT: BOATS

Houseboats: Walpole-Nornalup Inlet

1279. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In regard to commercial houseboats on Walpole-Nornalup Inlet, how many are there?
- (2) What body has granted the operators a licence to operate?
- (3) How often are the operators required to renew their licences?
- (4) (a) Are there any conditions on the licence to operate;
(b) if "Yes"—
 - (i) what are the conditions;
 - (ii) by whom are they enforced;
 - (iii) have there been any breaches of the conditions;
 - (iv) if so, what are they?
- (5) (a) Was there any trial period of operation;
(b) if "Yes"—
 - (i) how long did it last;
 - (ii) by whom was it monitored;
 - (iii) is there any report on the trial period;
 - (iv) if so, will he please table it?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) Two houseboats have been surveyed and are operating. The owner is licensed to operate three.
- (2) Department of Marine and Harbours under the WA Marine (Hire and Drive Vessels) Regulations 1983.
- (3) Once only. However, vessels are required to undergo a survey annually.
- (4) (a) Yes, the licence is subject to a bi-annual public review and is in force to June 1995;
(b) (i) confined to Walpole-Nornalup Inlets and as attached;
(ii) Department of Marine and Harbours;
(iii) no;
(iv) not applicable.

- (5) (a) Yes;
(b) (i) 12 months from June 1984;
(ii) Department of Marine and Harbours;
(iii) yes;
(iv) yes.

(See paper No. 260.)

PORTS AND HARBOURS

Albany: Woodchipping

1281. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Regional Development and the North West:

- (1) What changes have been made to loading arrangements in the Port of Albany in connection with the proposed woodchipping development on the south coast?
- (2) If none, are changes being considered?
- (3) If changes are being considered, what are they?
- (4) In view of the recent public concern expressed about the proposed woodchipping development on the south coast, will he institute a public inquiry into the proposal?
- (5) If "No" to (4), why not?
- (6) If "Yes" to (4), when will the inquiry commence?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) The Albany Port Authority has made no changes at this stage.
- (2) If any changes are to be undertaken they will not occur until the environmental report has been finalised.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) to (6) Any inquiry into the proposed woodchipping development would be as a result of consultation between the appropriate Government departments and agencies.

PORTS AND HARBOURS: FREMANTLE

Disputes: Statistics

1289. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) How many stoppages were there at the Port of Fremantle between 1 January 1985 and 30 June 1985?

- (2) How many stoppages have there been at the Fremantle port from 1 July 1985 to date?
- (3) When was the last stoppage?
- (4) What was its duration?
- (5) What was the cause of the stoppage?
- (6) What was the cost of the stoppage to—
 - (a) the port;
 - (b) shippers;
 - (c) exporters?
- (7) Did any ships by-pass Fremantle as the result of the last stoppage?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) 35.
- (2) 29.
- (3) From 12.30 p.m. on 10 October to 10.30 a.m. on 14 October.
- (4) 4 days.
- (5) Stoppage was a result of the FPA not agreeing to a claim for two paid stop-work meetings a year.
- (6) It is not possible to assess the cost.
- (7) Yes—*Anro Asia* and *Encounter Bay*.

STATE FINANCE: BUDGET

Resources Development Department: Plant Purchases

1295. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) With regard to the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates for the Department of Resources Development, appearing as Division 77, what plant, equipment, etc., is it intended to purchase with the \$109 000 appearing as Item 7?
- (2) What are the details of the resource strategies and project management programmes to be financed by \$301 000 appearing as Item 9?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) Equipment to be purchased is as follows—

	\$
Word processing equipment	74 000
Computing equipment	26 000
Other office equipment	9 000
	<hr/>
	\$109 000

- (2) The term "resource strategies and project management" embraces a number of areas of expenditure including travel, consultant studies, computing, library, and drafting. The amounts can be broken down by divisions as follows—

	\$
Project coordination division	36 000
Project investigations division	14 000
Policy division	51 000
Resources surveys and studies—consultancies	200 000
	<hr/>
	\$301 000

ENVIRONMENT

Field Projects: Budget Allocation

1297. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for the Environment:

For what detailed projects and purposes has \$1 235 000 been allocated under Item 9 of Division 43 of the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates?

Mr DAVIES replied:

1985-86

	\$
Evaluation Branch	174 000
Planning and Research Branch	608 000
Marine Resources Branch	281 000
Terrestrial studies	95 000
State conservation strategy	33 000
Grant to Water Research Centre	44 000
	<hr/>
	\$1 235 000

MINES DEPARTMENT

Revenue: Increase

1305. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

With regard to the estimated revenue of \$2 108 000 from the Mines Department revenue, for what reason is this estimate some \$700 000 higher than the 1984-85 revenue?

Mr PARKER replied:

Most of the difference is on account of \$629 000 recouped from the State Development Fund for Argyle social impact group activities.

ENERGY: PETROLEUM

Royalties: Sources

1306. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

With regard to the estimated royalty income of \$29 400 000 from petroleum in the 1985-86 Revenue Estimates, from what source and in what proportions is this revenue to be derived?

Mr PARKER replied:

Petroleum—\$25.3 million;
Natural Gas—\$4.1 million.

LAND CLEARING REGULATIONS

Draft

1310. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Have draft regulations been finalised relating to the control of land clearing?
- (2) If so, what persons, industry groups, and other bodies participated in preparing the draft regulations?
- (3) Are the draft regulations available for public consideration?
- (4) If not, why not?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) Regulations under the Soil and Land Conservation Act have been drafted to require landholders to notify the Commissioner of Soil Conservation of their intention to clear land in excess of one hectare.
- (2) Primary Industry Association.
Pastoralists and Graziers Association.
Local Government Association.
Country Shire Councils' Association.
Department of Conservation and Land Management.
Public Works Department.
Lands and Surveys Department.
Main Roads Department.
Department of Conservation and Environment.
Town Planning Department.
Mines Department.
Department of Local Government.
- (3) and (4) It is considered that there has been adequate discussion with organisations representing interested parties.

ABATTOIRS

Lamb: Sales

1324. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture:

What quantity of lamb has been sold on—

- (a) the local market;
- (b) export to overseas destinations;
- (c) export to other Australian States?

Mr EVANS replied:

The latest period for which statistics are readily available for Western Australia is July/June 1984-85. The Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board has advised that its sales in that period were—

- (a) 9 215 tonnes;
- (b) 6 559 tonnes;
- (c) 610 tonnes.

There have not been any further exports to the Eastern States since November 1984.

In addition to the quantity in (a), the meat inspection branch, Health Department, has advised that 191 216 carcasses were imported into Western Australia from other States in 1984-85. This is equivalent to 3 059 tonnes—conversion at 16kg per carcass.

TRANSPORT: FREIGHT

Perth-Pinjarra: Permit

1326. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Does a person need a permit to cart goods from Perth to Pinjarra, for example, a backhoe?
- (2) If so, why?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Transport Act requires that all transport undertaken outside of a 50 kilometre radius of the General Post Office, Perth, be licensed, unless specifically exempted. There is no exemption for goods being carried from Perth to Pinjarra.

ABATTOIRS: WA MEAT MARKETING CORPORATION

Government Representative

1330. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) With regard to the Government representative on the proposed Western Australian Meat Marketing Corporation, is this proposed member to be a member of the Public Service?
- (2) If not, what specific qualifications does the Government have in mind for this representative?
- (3) What are the specific "Government interests" that are considered "essential" for this member to represent?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) and (2) This has not yet been determined.
- (3) The Government has a commitment to provide a service abattoir and has a substantial financial interest in the Robb Jetty abattoir. The Western Australian Meat Marketing Corporation will be the major user of the Robb Jetty abattoir. The role of the Government representative is to advise the Minister on marketing developments, with particular reference to their effect on the operations of the Robb Jetty abattoir.

He will have a general function to provide advice on Government policies to the corporation and to provide liaison between the corporation, the Minister, and relevant Government agencies.

ABATTOIRS: WA MEAT MARKETING CORPORATION

Staff: Conditions

1331. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Will the managerial and administrative staff of the proposed Western Australian Meat Marketing Corporation be employed under terms and conditions approved by the Public Service Board?
- (2) If not, will the corporation be free to determine salaries and conditions of employment?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.

ABATTOIRS

Meat Marketing: Efficiency

1332. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) With regard to the legislation to establish a Western Australian Meat Marketing Corporation, how has it been determined that amalgamation of meat marketing functions will result in "greater efficiency in marketing transactions"?
- (2) What is the result of the financial benefits and cost savings referred to in the second reading speech?
- (3) By whom was the financial survey undertaken which indicated better financial returns to producers from the proposed legislative changes?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) The amalgamation was recommended by the independent committee of inquiry into Government involvement in the meat industry. The inquiry concluded that the operations of the marketing division and the Lamb Marketing Board could be carried out more effectively and efficiently by one body.
- (2) Gains in operational efficiency will benefit livestock producers.
- (3) Reference has not been made to a financial survey in this regard.

ABATTOIRS

Meat Industry Working Group: Membership

1333. Mr PETER JONES, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) With reference to the legislation to establish a Western Australian Meat Marketing Corporation, who were the members of the meat industry working group established by the Government to consider the recommendations of the interim, and the final Treloar report?

- (2) Did the working group meet with livestock procedures, industry groups, and other interested parties to discuss the Treloar recommendations and their implementation?
- (3) If so, what was the substance and result of any such discussions?
- (4) With which groups did the working party meet?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) (a) Mr I. Johnston, Chairman and Convenor, Department of the Premier and Cabinet;
- (ii) Mr A. Payne, Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union;
- (iii) Mr B. Gabbedy, Department of Agriculture.
- (2) See answer to question (4).
- (3) A range of views was presented to the working group, which conveyed those views to the Government. In order to advance the formation of the Western Australian Meat Marketing Corporation, the working group recommended to the Government that an interim meat marketing advisory committee be appointed.
- (4) Primary Industry Association, Pastoralists' and Graziers' Association, Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board, and Western Australian Meat Commission.

ROAD

Newman-Port Hedland: Environmental Protection Authority Recommendations

1334. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) In view of the fact that permission for the construction of the Newman to Port Hedland section of the Perth to Darwin national highway has been granted, and construction work is well under way, can he please inform the House whether or not the recommendations contained in the Environmental Protection Authority's Bulletin 175 have been accepted by the Government?
- (2) If the Environmental Protection Authority recommendations have been accepted, on what date were they accepted?

- (3) If they have not been accepted, why have they not been accepted?

Mr GRILL replied:

- (1) to (3) The summary to the report indicated that the Environmental Protection Authority believes that the proposed highway would not be environmentally acceptable unless—
 - (i) The MRD adopts the environmental safeguards and management measures proposed in the ERMP/draft EIS, the supplement to the ERMP/draft EIS, and in the EPA report; and
 - (ii) finance is forthcoming for the National Parks Nature Conservation Authority to undertake the necessary additional management requirements for Hamersley Range National Park.

In regard to (i), on 6 September 1984 the Minister for Transport advised the Minister for Conservation and Land Management that the environmental safeguards are acceptable.

In regard to (ii), this is quite distinct from the highway project, although it has made decisions in regard to finance for the Hamersley Range National Park more urgent. It is unlikely, however, there would be much impact on the park other than from the direct road construction activity until late 1986. I understand the Department of Conservation and Land Management is currently preparing a submission on additional management requirements of the park.

LAND: NATIONAL PARK

Hamersley Range: Rangers

1335. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Conservation and Land Management:

- (1) How many ranger staff were employed in Hamersley Range National Park in July 1984?
- (2) How many ranger staff were employed in Hamersley Range National Park in July 1985?
- (3) What was the budget for management of Hamersley Range National Park in the year 1983-84?

- (4) What was the budget for management of Hamersley Range National Park in the year 1984-85?
- (5) What is the proposed budget for Hamersley Range National Park in 1985-86?
- (6) Is a management plan for Hamersley Range National Park currently in preparation?
- (7) If a plan is in preparation, is it being prepared by the planning group of the Department of Conservation and Land Management?
- (8) If "No" to (7), can he please explain why this is so?
- (9) Is a broad-scale fire management plan currently being prepared for the Pilbara region, as recommended by the Environmental Protection Authority in Bulletin 175?
- (10) If "Yes" to (9), can he please state—
 - (a) who is preparing the plan;
 - (b) when the plan will be completed;
 - (c) who is being consulted in the course of preparing that plan;
 - (d) what is the purpose for which the plan is being prepared?

Mr DAVIES replied:

- (1) Three.
- (2) Three.
- (3) \$20 000—does not include wages and salaries.
- (4) \$23 000—does not include wages and salaries.
- (5) \$38 800—does not include wages and salaries.
- (6) Yes. Although it is in the very early stages, a planning team has been appointed. Information has been sought from other departments and preliminary writing has occurred.
- (7) No.
- (8) Management plans in the Department of Conservation and Land Management are prepared by planning teams which are drawn from appropriate areas of expertise throughout the department. As with other management plans, the planning team for Hamersley Range National Park includes a member of the planning branch.
- (9) No. The background information which was identified in the EPA report has continued to be collected, especially in relation to the protection of mulga. The department advises that priority has to be given to the management plan for the national park. It would be logical, however, to pick up the broader fire management plan when the park management plan is further advanced.
- (10) Not applicable.

ROAD

Newman-Port Hedland: Planning Reports

1336. Dr DADOUR, to the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Will he please table copies of the planning reports on the Ophthalmia, Robinson, Fortescue, and Chichester sections of the Newman to Port Hedland national highway, along with any comments made thereon by the Environmental Protection Authority in accordance with recommendation 6.1.13 of the Environmental Protection Authority's Bulletin 175?
- (2) Will he also please table copies of the vegetation surveys on the Chichester and Fortescue sections of the route prepared by the Main Roads Department in accordance with recommendation 6.1.11 of the Environmental Protection Authority's Bulletin 175?
- (3) What actions will the Main Roads Department take to control off-road vehicle access from the highway into Hamersley Range National Park?
- (4) To what extent has the proposed course of action set out in the answer to (3) above been implemented?
- (5) Was the National Parks and Nature Conservation Authority consulted in the development of the above procedures, as recommended by the Environmental Protection Authority in recommendation 6.1.2 of Bulletin 175?
- (6) If "Yes" to (5), was the authority satisfied with the final decision?
- (7) If "No" to (5), why did consultation not take place?

- (8) Will he please table details of any monitoring of the impact of road construction on drainage and the health of mulga communities, as set out in recommendation 6.1.10 of the Environmental Protection Authority's Bulletin 175?
- (9) Is a study currently underway of the likely future road network which is to be developed to link in with the Newman to Port Hedland national highway, as set out in recommendation 6.1.10 of the Environmental Protection Authority's Bulletin 175?
- (10) If "Yes" to (9), will he please state—
- who is carrying out the study;
 - what are the terms of reference of the study;
 - when will the study be completed;
 - who is being consulted in the course of the study;
 - will the results of the study be made public?
- (11) If "No" to (9), why is no such study in preparation?

Mr GRILL replied:

- Copies of planning reports on the Ophthalmia and Fortescue sections were forwarded to the Department of Conservation and Environment on 3 September 1985 for advising the Environmental Protection Authority. However, no comments have been received. These reports are tabled as requested. In keeping with recommendation 6.1.13 of the Environmental Protection Authority's Bulletin 175, planning reports will be forwarded to the authority prior to construction of the Robinson and Chichester sections.
- The vegetation surveys for the Fortescue section have been completed and the report is tabled as requested. Preparation of the report for the vegetation survey of the Chichester section is currently being undertaken.
- The issue of off-road vehicles in the national park has been discussed with the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Deviation of off-road vehicles from the highway will to a significant extent be limited within the national park due to the existence of a road cutting approximately one kilometre in length and the natural barrier of the Munjina East Gorge through which the highway passes. In other sections of the park the normal practice of erecting barrier fences where necessary and the elimination of unwanted tracks will be undertaken.
- As construction for the section through the national park has yet to be undertaken, none of these measures has been implemented.
- Answered by (3).
- The Department of Conservation and Land Management, which has replaced the National Parks Authority, was consulted and has agreed in discussion to the measures proposed. Formal agreement is to be sought when contract documentation is available for review.
- Answered by (3).
- Recommendation 6.1.10 does not apply to mulga. The relevant recommendation is 6.1.7, and as construction of the section of the highway, which was the subject of the environmental review and management programme, has only recently commenced, such monitoring has not been possible. Following the installation of drainage structures and a reasonable period of rainfall, some monitoring can commence.
- Yes.
- The Main Roads Department;
 - the terms of reference are essentially to estimate the future travel demands likely to result from the completion of the national highway and to propose an acceptable supporting road network which would be required to meet these demands;
 - prior to the completion of the national highway;
 - at this stage consultation has taken place with the Department of Conservation and Land Management, the Department of Con-

ervation and Environment, the Tourism Commission, and local government;

(e) this has not been decided.

(11) Answered by (9).

(See paper No. 261.)

ENVIRONMENT: PEEL INLET-HARVEY ESTUARY

Studies: Cost

1337. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Premier:

(1) How much did the advertising campaign in the *Coastal Districts Times* on 2 September, 3 October, 10 October, and 17 October 1985, and in the *Mandurah Telegraph* on 25 September, 2 October, 9 October and 16 October 1985, with regard to the studies into the Peel Inlet, Harvey Estuary, and channel entrance cost?

(2) What was the cost of printing and posting a letter to residents of Mandurah on the same subject from his department?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) and (2) Final costs are not known as not all accounts have been received.

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT: OFFICE

Member for Mandurah: Outgoings

1338. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Premier:

What are all the outgoings per year for the member for Mandurah's new office?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The rental, as quoted for question 569 (6), is inclusive of normal outgoings. In addition, annual cleaning and electricity charges are estimated to amount to \$1 200 per annum.

MINERAL: GOLD

Armway Mining Pty Ltd: Bond

1339. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Further to question 1145 of 17 October 1985, what steps will the Government take to ensure that any bond paid to it by Armway Mining Pty Ltd for the purpose of covering adequate rehabilitation of all mined areas will be sufficient to meet the costs of these operations?

Mr PARKER replied:

The fixing of the amount of any bond required will be made on the evaluation of professional officers from the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Department of Mines.

1340. *Postponed.*

MINERAL: GOLD

Armway Mining Pty Ltd: Arrangements

1341. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

(1) Further to question 1033 (2) of 15 October 1985, will he inquire of—

- (a) his department;
 - (b) his adviser(s);
 - (c) other Ministers;
 - (d) the Premier,
- whether any—

- (i) contracts;
 - (ii) agreements;
 - (iii) offers;
 - (iv) undertakings,
- exist between—

- (A) Armway Mining Pty Ltd;
 - (B) Futuris Corporation Ltd;
 - (C) Langton Holdings Ltd,
- and—

- (I) members of the Government;
- (II) a government department;
- (III) a government authority?

(2) Will he please inform the House of the results of his investigations?

Mr PARKER replied:

(1) and (2) As I have told the member, I am not aware of any contracts or agreements. Nor am I aware of any offers or undertakings.

However, I would refer him to my answer to question 958 of 9 October 1985 in which I advised the member for Mt Lawley that a two-stage proposal to explore and assess the Armway gold prospect had been approved.

As I have many times indicated publicly, I have foreshadowed approval of an operation which is consistent with certain conditions laid down, including all of those conditions required by the Department of Conservation and Land Management.

Since then, a request has been received from solicitors acting for the parties to vary the exploration programme approved, and this matter is still to be considered.

MINERAL: GOLD

Hamersley Range National Park: Tenements

1342. Mr RUSHTON, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

- (1) Further to question 486 of 1985 and the unauthorised mining activities on tenements held by Mr T. R. Hargreaves in Hamersley Range National Park—
 - (a) what was the size of the area so mined;
 - (b) what quantity of gold was removed from the site mined?
- (2) Further to questions 873 and 1048 of 1985, does he know who are—
 - (a) the directors;
 - (b) main shareholders,
 of—
 - (i) Langton Holdings Pty. Ltd.;
 - (ii) Futuris Corporation Ltd.;
 - (iii) Armway Mining Pty. Ltd.?
- (3) If “Yes” to (1) and (2), why will he not release the information to me?
- (4) If “No” to (1) and (2), why does he not know?

Mr PARKER replied:

- (1) (a) Approximately 100 metres square;
- (b) not known.
- (2) to (4) If the member wishes to know the directors and shareholders of these companies, he can obtain this information from a public inquiry to the Corporate Affairs Office in the same way as myself.

WORKS

Building Authority: Ministerial Control

1343. Mr MENSAROS, to the Premier:

Further to his reply to question 1024 in this session, having acknowledged the statutory existence of the Western Australian Building Authority, would he please explain why this authority is not listed at all in the 10 May 1985 issue of the *Government Gazette* public information about the administration of departments and authorities, etc., under the control of the respective Ministers?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

As was stated in my response to question 1024, responsibility for the Western Australian Building Authority was assigned to the Minister for Works in an amendment to the Public Works Act assented to on 27 December 1984.

If the member is still unclear as to where this responsibility is assigned, note will be made of his concern and taken into account in printing future issues of the publication.

WATER AUTHORITY

Assets: Depreciation

1344. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

- (1) Is the Water Authority of Western Australia using two different systems of depreciation calculations regarding its assets serving the metropolitan area—the pre-30 June 1985 assets of the Metropolitan Water Authority—and those which used to be on the books of the Public Works Department country water undertakings?
- (2) If so, what are these two systems—replacement value or historical value—and what is the current rate of depreciation for each valuation?

Mr TONKIN replied:

- (1) and (2) For determining overall revenue requirements in 1985-86, the Water Authority of Western Australia has used replacement cost depreciation in the metropolitan area and historical cost depreciation for country utilities.

It is expected that, in line with accounting standards, the Water Authority will report the historical cost depreciation as an expense in the profit and loss statement and the replacement cost adjustment as an appropriation from the current year's operation to an asset replacement reserve.

Different service lives and therefore depreciation rates apply to various asset categories. Therefore no single depreciation rate is applied.

WATER AUTHORITY

Five-year Corporate Development Plans

1345. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Water Resources:

Is the Water Authority of Western Australia going to prepare and publish five year corporate development plans each year from 1985-90 onwards, as its predecessor the Metropolitan Water Authority used to do?

Mr TONKIN replied:

The member will be aware that the Water Authority of Western Australia has no single predecessor, but was formed as a result of a merger of the Metropolitan Water Authority and the country water division of the Public Works Department. A five-year corporate plan for the Water Authority of Western Australia was published in July this year and it is expected that the authority will continue to publish these plans in future years.

SPORT AND RECREATION: CYCLES

Helmets: School Students

1346. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Is he aware that there is an increasing demand by many parents and citizens associations for either compulsory wearing of crash helmets by student cyclists or at least to have a concentrated effort for a State-wide programme in schools to show the necessity for head protection on a voluntary basis?
- (2) If so, would he initiate any one of these requests and measures?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Yes. The Government through its bicycle policy advisory committee, is aware of a growing public concern for student cyclists to wear protective helmets.

Children in "Bike-Ed" programmes in primary schools are educated in the benefits of using helmets and the Education Department has fostered the interests of parents and citizens groups in respect to the development of helmet purchasing procedures.

- (2) In the light of the answer to the previous question, the Government will continue to monitor the use of bicycle helmets and take the appropriate actions as the situation develops in the interests of child safety and the community in general.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Churchlands: Music and Drama Auditorium

1347. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) Has he received a letter from the Churchlands Senior High School Parents and Citizens Association requesting the inclusion of suitable seating in the music and drama auditorium which is planned to be completed during the current financial year?
- (2) If so, is he going to oblige as otherwise it would appear the much larger capital outlay for the building would be wasted at least until seating can be obtained, without which the building cannot be put to use?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) A decision will be made when the demands on the funds available in the current financial year are known. The building can be used without the provision of permanent seating.

HOUSING: RENTAL

Bayswater: Repairs

1348. Mr MENSAROS, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is the repair work presently being performed in Homeswest houses comprising rental accommodation in the

area between Coode Street and Laurence Street, Bayswater, being done by day labour or contract?

- (2) If the latter is the case, was the contract let for the particular repair jobs or is it part of an ongoing repair contract?
- (3) Whatever the arrangements, could he please disclose the works involved in the respective Homeswest properties and the aggregate cost to Homeswest.

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) Work is being carried out by Homeswest day labour maintenance work force.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The project involves external repairs and painting of 86 Homeswest rental properties in the locality of Bayswater and forms part of the annual programmed maintenance budget for external renovations. Estimated cost of the project is \$135 644.

1349. *Postponed.*

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Willetton: Science Laboratory

1350. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Education:

- (1) With reference to question 709 of 19 September 1985 concerning the Willetton Senior High School science laboratory, can he now advise if the documentation work for this project has yet been completed?
- (2) If no, when it is anticipated that the work will be completed?
- (3) When is it anticipated that the work on this project will commence?
- (4) When is it anticipated the work on this project will be completed?

Mr PEARCE replied:

- (1) The documentation is not yet completed.
- (2) Early in November 1985.
- (3) The end of November 1985.
- (4) The end of January 1986.

FISHERIES

Rock Lobster: Licences

1351. Mr MacKINNON, to the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) How many licences are currently issued in Western Australia to rock lobster fishermen?
- (2) How many of these licences changed hands during the year ended 30 June 1985?
- (3) How many licensed "wet" fishing boats are there in Western Australia?
- (4) How many of these licences changed hands during the year ended 30 June 1985?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) 768 licensed rock lobster boats as at 20 September 1985.
- (2) Approximately 110 rock lobster fishing boat licences were transferred in the year ended 30 June 1985.
- (3) Approximately 1 000 fishing boats, other than rock lobster boats. The figure provided does not include dinghies, but does include prawn trawlers, scallop and tuna boats, etc.
- (4) Approximately 150.

HOUSING

Land: Pinjarra

1352. Mr BRADSHAW, to the Minister for Housing:

- (1) How many blocks have been purchased at Pinjarra by Homeswest in the last 12 months?
- (2) Are any blocks of land currently being purchased at Pinjarra?
- (3) Where are the blocks as mentioned in (1) and (2) in Pinjarra?
- (4) Will he name the blocks which are for Aborigines and those which are intended for Caucasians?

Mr WILSON replied:

- (1) and (2) Homeswest has negotiated purchase of 17 lots in the last 12 months, of which 14 are currently being settled. Purchases have progressed in liaison with the local government.
- (3) and (4) It is not policy to provide details of either land acquired or intended use.

ABATTOIRS

WA Lamb Marketing Board: Revenue

1353. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture:

In 1984-85—

- (1) What was the total revenue received by the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board?
- (2) What revenue did the board receive from—
 - (a) Western Australian market sales;
 - (b) overseas export sales;
 - (c) interstate export sales.
- (3) What was the average price received by the board from—
 - (a) Western Australian market sales;
 - (b) overseas export sales;
 - (c) interstate export sales?
- (4) What was the net return available for lamb producers from board sales—
 - (a) on the Western Australian market;
 - (b) to overseas markets;
 - (c) to interstate markets?

Mr EVANS replied:

I have been advised by the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board as follows—

- (1) \$32.4 million.
- (2) (a) \$18.2 million;
(b) and (c) \$14.2 million.
- (3) (a) 165.6 cents per kg;
(b) and (c) 165.7 cents per kg.
- (4) (a) 116.0 cents per kg;
(b) and (c) 67.4 cents per kg.

ABATTOIRS

Lamb Sales

1354. Mr OLD, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) What was the total volume of lamb received by the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board during the period 1 July 1985 to 18 October 1985?

- (2) What quantity of lamb was sold during the same period by the board to—
 - (a) the local market;
 - (b) export to overseas destinations;
 - (c) export to other Australian States?
- (3) What quantity of lamb was held in cold storage at 30 June 1985?
- (4) What quantity of lamb is currently held in cold storage?
- (5) What portion of that held in cold storage represents carryover stocks from 30 June 1985?
- (6) Does the board hold overseas export orders to cover those stocks held?
- (7) If "Yes" to (6), at what price and on what basis have the contracts been negotiated?

Mr EVANS replied:

I have been advised by the Western Australian Lamb Marketing Board that the information sought is not readily available for the period 1 July 1985 to 18 October 1985. The information shown below is for the period 1 July 1985 to 30 September 1985—

- (1) 289 314 lambs were received—3 999 tonnes, carcase weight.
- (2) (a) 1 645 tonnes;
(b) 1 236 tonnes;
(c) 2 tonnes.
- (3) 348 tonnes.
- (4) The information sought is confidential to the board.
- (5) Approximately 10 tonnes.
- (6) and (7) The information sought is confidential to the board.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MR BOB MAUMILL

Association: Premier

347. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

I refer the Premier to the most recent issue of *The Western Mail* which disclosed that a Government financial adviser and a radio announcer had allegedly joined, on 3 September 1975, in an attempt to defraud on-course bookmakers at Kalgoorlie by delaying the broadcast of the Bernborough Handicap from Sandown. Given that

the radio announcer was the Premier's close friend, Mr Bob Maumill, who was broadcasting on the 6IX radio programme "Maumill at Midday" at the relevant time, I ask the Premier—

- (1) Was the Premier aware of these allegations when he agreed to appear on Mr Maumill's radio programme every Monday?
- (2) Was the Premier aware of these allegations when he went into partnership with Mr Maumill in the purchase of a racehorse?
- (3) Given that the transcripts of the WA Turf Club's investigation into the allegations referred to Mr Maumill as not being a fit and proper person to be associated in any way with the racing industry, does the Premier believe that Mr Maumill is a fit and proper person to be associated with the Premier and, through him, the Western Australian Government?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) to (3) I should start by saying that the Leader of the Opposition has previously appeared on Mr Maumill's programme himself, and I did not hear him raise objections to Mr Maumill's character at that time.

In respect of the specific questions asked, I was aware that the member for Nedlands had previously referred in this House to certain matters that I believe are the matters the subject of the question; but I did not have the detailed knowledge that the Leader of the Opposition now refers to about this matter—which is about ten years old.

However, to apply the same morality as the Leader of the Opposition would apply to me or to members of the Government, I should ask the Leader of the Opposition why it is that members of the Opposition have frequently appeared with Mr Maumill on his radio programme; why it is that the national Leader of the Opposition, Mr Howard, spent an hour on Mr Maumill's radio programme; and whether the Leader of the Opposition, having possession of these facts, and the member for Nedlands, having possession of these facts, have chosen

either to appear on Mr Maumill's radio programme or to have lunch with Mr Maumill at different times.

Mr Hassell: Our association with him is completely different from yours, which is regular, close, and personal.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Perhaps it is different, but in terms of the question of the Leader of the Opposition, he is talking about the appearance on a radio programme with Mr Maumill; and I simply point out to him—

Mr Hassell: But you are assisting to promote his programme and him.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: —that the Leader of the Opposition has appeared on the same programme and, I understand, not only has he done that but he has written to complain that he has not been able to appear as frequently as he would like.

Mr Hassell: That is not true.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Whether it was the Leader of the Opposition or his staff, I understand that complaints have been made.

Let me set the record perfectly straight. I have no hesitation about appearing on Mr Maumill's radio programme despite the efforts of the Leader of the Opposition to either have me removed or cause me to remove myself.

COURT: SUPREME COURT

Civil Cases: Delays

348. Mrs HENDERSON, to the Premier:

Have there been any further reductions in delays in the listing of civil cases before the Supreme Court?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Yes. Further dramatic reductions have been achieved. There are now only 19 cases entered for hearing before the court which do not have a date for trial. It is estimated that the 19 will be heard by January next year. This compares with the position two years ago when there was a backlog of 219 cases and anticipated delays before hearing of 14 months.

The dramatic reductions of the backlog of cases in the Supreme Court is a result of a package of measures pre-

viously announced by this Government. These measures included the appointment of an additional Supreme Court judge, the service by the Chief Judge of the District Court as a commissioner of the Supreme Court, Government legislation to enable the District Court to hear all personal injuries cases and other civil claims up to \$80 000, and agreement with the Commonwealth that most bankruptcy work will be done by the Federal Court rather than the Supreme Court.

The backlog of cases in the civil list of the District Court is expected to be cleared in five months. The backlog there includes Supreme Court matters remitted after the change in jurisdiction. The pretrial conference system will greatly assist in that clearance.

There has also been an improvement in the court lists in regional centres—in particular, Kalgoorlie and Bunbury.

This Government is pleased with the success of its measures and will continue to monitor the situation. Court procedures continue to be reviewed for possible changes to ensure that cases are disposed of without delay.

MR LAURIE CONNELL

Allegations: Premier's Awareness

349. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

The Premier appears to have indicated that he was aware of the allegations against Mr Maumill at the time he agreed to appear regularly on his radio programme. I now ask the Premier whether he was aware of those allegations against the Government's financial adviser, who was publicly named at the time he committed the State to the engagement of the financial adviser to the State Government.

The SPEAKER: Order! Having considered the question, I find that the Leader of the Opposition has not made clear who is the financial adviser. I think that the Leader of the Opposition ought to say who that financial adviser is.

Mr HASSELL: I will rephrase the question, Mr Speaker.

I ask the Premier whether he was aware of the recently published allegations concerning Mr Laurie Connell, the financial adviser who has been employed on more than one occasion by this Government, at the time he, as the Premier and Treasurer, approved employment of that financial adviser.

MR BRIAN BURKE replied:

I do not want to indulge in any excessive condemnation of the Leader of the Opposition in respect of this line of questioning which goes to the assassination of characters of individual people, but I should make a couple of points clear. Firstly, as I have already said, in respect of the detail of the matter published in *The Western Mail*, I certainly was not aware of the detail referred to in the Leader of the Opposition's question. That is the first part of the answer.

The second part of the answer is that Mr Connell is not a financial adviser to the Government. He has been engaged, I think, on two occasions, one in respect of the purchase of the Northern Mining Corporation NL, the second with Price Waterhouse to do a report on the Government's insurance activities. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to raise questions and to frame them quite wrongly by calling people advisers, as he has in this instance, that is his wont.

The last thing I will say is that I am not surprised at this line of questioning which refers to *The Western Mail* and to stories carried in that paper. The Leader of the Opposition will know of the events of the past few days. I do not wish to refer to them—I understand that statements made by certain people are considered to be *sub judice*, Mr Speaker—but I do want to make this general statement, of which the Leader of the Opposition might well take heed: This Government will not be stood over by people, regardless of their financial resources or influence. If we allow ourselves to be stood over, directed, or intimidated in any way, we will be as guilty of the

compromise that the Opposition has raised groundlessly in the past few weeks as we would have been had there been substance to the Opposition's allegations.

I make the point once again: This Government will not be stood over by anyone in the community, regardless of the financial or other influence that that individual or group or organisation might have.

Mr MacKinnon: Not even John O'Connor?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Not even John O'Connor.

In respect of the particular matter raised by the Leader of the Opposition, if the implication of his question is that somehow or other there is some immoral or unethical behaviour involved in anything the Government has done, let him state it. Let him not make innuendos about people's characters.

As far as this Government is concerned, if the Leader of the Opposition is a stalking horse for someone in the community; if the Leader of the Opposition, possessed of questions framed outside the House, comes into this place to ask those questions for ulterior purposes; if the Leader of the Opposition sees it as his role within this Parliament to come into this place and raise questions based on reports in *The Western Mail* or framed from outside this Parliament; let him make it perfectly clear that that is how he sees his role.

Mr MacKinnon: *The Western Mail* does not run the Opposition.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I am not saying that it runs the Opposition. I am just talking about the Leader of the Opposition and a set of questions. I am not talking about the Opposition.

In the same way the Leader of the Opposition should explain a Press statement that he distributed some months ago talking about a third television licence in terms that I had refused publicly to state, because I did not think it was in the best interests of

this State or this Government; but apparently when the Leader of the Opposition encountered the same sort of an approach he chose to publish the release.

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: PREMIER

Influence: Outside

350. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

I ask a supplementary question. Does the Premier believe that the allegations published against Mr Maumill and Mr Connell, if true, are in any way relevant to the relationship between himself and those people, the Government, and the taxpayers, and whether those allegations, if true, should influence his conduct as the Premier in relation to those people?

The SPEAKER: Order! The question is out of order.

HEALTH: HOSPITAL

Kalgoorlie: Development

351. Mr TAYLOR, to the Minister for Health:

What is the current situation with respect to the further development of Kalgoorlie Hospital after the excellent work being done there by the Minister over the past couple of years?

Mr HODGE replied:

The Government has called for selective tenders for stages three and four of the multimillion dollar development of Kalgoorlie Hospital. The development will involve construction of a new kitchen, staff dining room, pharmacy, maternity nursing facility, speech therapy department, and podiatry area.

Tenders close on 12 November.

Construction of stages three and four will provide a world-class hospital facility capable of serving the health needs of the goldfields area. It is a reflection of this Government's continued commitment to the goldfields district, particularly in the area of health care.

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: PREMIER

Relationship: Mr Laurie Connell and Mr Bob Maumill

352. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

Does the Premier intend to either—

- (a) Investigate the truth of the allegations to which I have referred, or,
- (b) if he is aware of the truth of them, alter his conduct to and relationship with the people referred to?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (a) and (b) The short answer is "No".

Let me also ask the Leader of the Opposition what his view is about some matters that might involve him and his dealings with certain people. I refer the Leader of the Opposition to a statement by Mr Bond which says, among other things, that Mr Holmes a Court said words to the effect that the Government should realise that if Mr Bond and Mr Holmes a Court were to combine their efforts they could probably change the Government. Mr Bond said that to the best of his recollection he had replied that he did not think they had to go to that extent. Mr Bond then explained how in talking to me he referred to the conversation and said in a previous meeting with Mr Holmes a Court that the issue was raised and Mr Holmes a Court had said that if they worked together the Government should realise they could probably change the Government. Mr Bond continued to say that he told me that he would not have a bar of that and he wanted me to know that.

Does the Leader of the Opposition believe that he should investigate the truth of those allegations?

Mr Hassell: In what sense?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: The Leader of the Opposition, in talking about the way in which the Government may have relations with different people, believes implicitly, although not stated, that the Government should check on the veracity of allegations made 13 years ago, investigate those allegations, take into account the results of the investigation, and act accordingly. If that is the standard of behav-

iour of the Leader of the Opposition, let him check on those allegations. I do not intend to.

I do not know whether either Mr Holmes a Court or Mr Bond is telling the truth. If Mr Bond is telling the truth there is a certain situation to be encountered. If Mr Holmes a Court is telling the truth there is another situation to be encountered. I do not intend to check on the allegations. They are nothing to do with the Government except in the sense that they were reported to me and I have testified to that fact with the tribunal. Those allegations highlight a situation that I put to the Leader of the Opposition which he should be investigating before he asks questions framed by other people.

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL

Tom Price District: Contract

353. Mr BRIDGE, to the Minister for Education:

Has a contract been let for the construction of new administration and manual arts facilities at the Tom Price District High School?

Mr PEARCE replied:

In general terms, I visited Tom Price District High School when I was in the Opposition and I was somewhat alarmed at the lack of facilities. As a net result the Budget has made provision for some \$620 000 to be spent in upgrading the administration and manual arts facilities at the Tom Price District High School. That in part is as a result of the representations made by the member for Kimberley.

I hope that will be some satisfaction to the member in going towards meeting the needs of the school. The whole question of secondary facilities at Tom Price has been looked at in a more thorough-going way because the member will be aware that in the past students have been going to the high school at an earlier stage than normal—that is, before year eight. The net result is that we shall probably have a more normal and satisfactory approach to secondary education in that area in the future.

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: PREMIER

Relationship: Mr Bob Maumill

354. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

I ask the Premier whether the allegations which have been published, and of which he is fully aware, are considered by him to indicate that he should in some way reconsider his relationship with Mr Maumill in the matter of his continuing appearance with him on the radio programme?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I have answered this question by saying "No" previously. I simply add that as far as I am concerned those allegations to which the Leader of the Opposition is referring might compare with the allegations that have been made by other people. I do not intend to investigate those and to refuse to talk to Mr Holmes a Court or Mr Bond. I am not going to say that it is my job to check upon whether or not either of those two people is telling the truth or telling lies.

Mr Hassell: Are you having regular dealings with Mr Holmes a Court and Mr Bond in the same way as you are with Mr Maumill?

Mr BRIAN BURKE: Much more serious dealings. The Government is continually having dealings through the Ministers' and Premier's offices with Mr Holmes a Court and Mr Bond.

That is the situation and I would have thought that the dealings on that level are more compelling and serious than the dealings with Mr Maumill on the level of a radio programme on which I answer listeners' letters. The Leader of the Opposition might disagree, but in any case the fundamental thrust of my answer is that I am not much concerned about allegations made at, before, or after the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal's hearings. I do not know who is telling the truth or who is telling lies. I do not believe it is the Government's job to try to check on who tells lies at, before or after the tribunal, or who is telling the truth.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to embark on that sort of exercise, it is up to him and he can act according to the findings of the exercise.

DEFENCE: COASTAL SURVEILLANCE

Aerial: Drug Trafficking

355. Mrs BUCHANAN, to the Premier:

Has the Premier requested the Commonwealth Government to extend its aerial surveillance of the Western Australian coast in order to further assist in the fight against drug trafficking?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

Yes. I have approached the Prime Minister pointing out the vulnerability of the coastline from Port Hedland to Fremantle, as this section of the coast is not subject to aerial surveillance. Aerial patrols by the Commonwealth's coastal protection unit operate out of Darwin as far as Port Hedland; and the coast south of Port Hedland is an area known to be favoured by drug traffickers.

Two drug finds have shown that traffickers are willing to land their cargoes on the west coast and transport them overland to the Eastern States. In 1983-84, 2 500 kilos of cannabis with a market value of \$5.4 million were found on Bernier Island off Carnarvon, and in June this year 180 kilos of hashish worth \$5.1 million were found to have been imported near Green Head.

The drug trafficking is of such concern that local fishermen have offered their help to police and customs officials.

It is vital that the Western Australian coastline be made as secure as possible against such illicit trade, and it is hoped that the Commonwealth will respond favourably to my request.

COMMUNICATIONS: TELEVISION

Station Licence

356. Mr HASSELL, to the Premier:

Referring to the statement of Mr Alan Bond to which the Premier has referred, I ask—

- (1) In discussions the Premier had with Mr Bond, as recorded in the document, concerning a third television licence, on the day before Mr Bond's bid for Swan Television in December 1983, did the Premier tell Mr Bond that appli-

cations for a third television licence would not be called for three years?

- (2) If so, on what authority did the Premier make that statement?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) and (2) To the best of my recollection, the answer is "No". In any case I would have thought it was obvious that I was in no position to tell Mr Bond whether or not a third television licence would be issued in this State.

The situation is that as a Government we have consistently refused to adopt a position in support of or contrary to a third television licence being issued in this State. That has not suited everyone; that is clear. Some people have wanted the State Government to take a stand on whether there should be a third commercial television licence.

The Cabinet has decided, not on one or two occasions, but on three or four occasions, that it is completely inappropriate for the State Government to be taking a stand on what is essentially a Federal Government matter and about which there is no clear public interest that we are able to discern. In that situation, we have consistently refused, despite the exhortations of different people, to take a stand on the third licence.

As I referred earlier to a Press release distributed by the Leader of the Opposition, I am not sure that the same can be said about the Opposition.

ROAD: MITCHELL FREEWAY

Stage 7: Design

357. Mr BURKETT, to the Minister for Transport:

What arrangements have been made to give residents between Duncraig and Edgewater the opportunity to become acquainted with the design of stage 7 of the Mitchell Freeway?

Mr GRILL replied:

The Main Roads Department, in association with the Wanneroo Shire Council, has already arranged for a model and plans of the project to be displayed at the Whitford Marmion Avenue Library, Hillarys; and it is

expected that the display will continue for approximately another two weeks. It has already been viewed by representatives of the Wanneroo Shire Council and by residents who attended a public meeting at Padbury Community Hall recently.

It is important for residents to realise that the State Government had advanced the construction of stage 7 by some five years, and this means work can begin about September 1986 with completion anticipated by late 1988.

Provision has been made in the proposed design for bus stations to be constructed in the future within the freeway reserve at Hepburn Avenue and Whitfords Avenue.

Cyclists and pedestrians will be able to cross the freeway on dual-use paths provided at Hepburn Avenue and Whitfords Avenue bridges, and also via an overpass in the vicinity of Robertson Road.

Every effort has been made in the design of the freeway to minimise its impact on the environment. Where residential development abuts the freeway reserve, and the roadway is in less than two metres of cut, bunds will be provided to reduce the impact of traffic noise. Existing native vegetation will be retained where possible and the landscaping for the freeway will feature native trees and shrubs.

MINISTER OF THE CROWN: PREMIER

Discussion: Mr Darcy Farrell

358. Mr MacKINNON, to the Premier:

- (1) In the Premier's discussions with Mr Darcy Farrell which led to the issue of a writ of defamation against the Premier, did the Premier speak to Mr Farrell as a private citizen or in his official capacity of Premier of Western Australia?
- (2) If the Premier spoke to Mr Farrell in his official capacity, will the public of Western Australia pay his legal costs in defending the defamation action and any damages resulting from the action?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

- (1) This question was asked of me yesterday and the answer was that I spoke to Mr Farrell and some other people about the conversation that Mr Bond had with me because they were people employed by the Government or Ministers of the Government—

Mr Hassell: That was when you thought these claims were not worth investigating a few minutes ago.

Mr BRIAN BURKE: I did not cause them to be investigated. I simply reported them to people who I thought should properly have knowledge of the conversation. That is how I answered the question yesterday, and the answer remains the same today.

Knowing that the Opposition has such a concern about this matter, I ask it whether it has any concern about the content of Mr Bond's statement? Is the Opposition concerned that, whether the statement is true or not, it does not show any concern for what are quite serious allegations about a conversation that may or may not have taken place? I would not know whether it did or not. What I do know is what I was told. What I do know is that the person who told me of the conversation with Mr Holmes a Court has repeated the substance of the conversation.

- (2) I am advised by the Crown Law Department that in telling people such as Ministers and others who appropriately had a right to know, my actions are covered by qualified privilege and that there is no question of any defamation being committed. That begs the question about why the writs were issued. I would not know whether the writs were issued for one purpose or another. It may well be they were issued to prevent public comment or public statement, and I understand that the issue of the writs did prevent the publication in some news media of Mr Bond's statement. I do not know and I would not say that the writs were issued for one reason or another, but I do say that appropriately telling people with whom I work of a conversation that they should know about, and being advised that my actions in so doing are covered by qualified privilege, indicates that there would

not be any costs to pay and that perhaps the defamation writ is one that seeks to stop, not to illuminate.

PASTORAL INDUSTRY: LEASES

Emanuel Family: Tabling of Documents

359. Mr BLAIKIE, to the Premier:

This question was first raised on 10 October. Regarding the purchase of the Emanuel property by Exim, has the Premier met with Exim and has he been able to arrange for the papers to be tabled; and if not, why not?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

The member for Vasse will be delighted to know that Exim has considered the question. I understand that the advice is about to come to me and should be available tomorrow or the next day. As soon as it comes to hand I will let the member know.

LAND

Mortgagee Sales: Moratorium

360. Mr CRANE, to the Minister for Agriculture:

- (1) Is there a moratorium on rural mortgage auctions?
- (2) If "Yes"—
 - (a) when was it introduced; and
 - (b) when will it cease to have effect?
- (3) If "No", how does the Government propose to prevent the forced sale of rural properties on a continuing basis?

Mr EVANS replied:

- (1) to (3) As the member for Moore would know, we do not have the mechanism at this time to institute a moratorium of the general sort to which he refers. However, quite extensive discussions have taken place with the Primary Industry Association, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association, and a wide representation of banks and other financial houses. In essence, on Thursday last the Premier and I met with a large group of representatives of the financial institutions, and at that meeting a paper was issued for which the representatives attending sought time to examine it. They will

respond to the Government, after which we will hold further consultation with the PIA and the PGA.

The financial institutions have responded quite positively. Where it was shown that mortgagee sales were being held, the Government recently became involved to the extent of requesting that they be rescheduled to give time to have the overall situation re-examined and also, incidentally, to allow the passage of time for the measures which the Government is endeavouring to develop to be proceeded further. Hopefully that will be fruitful and will become manifest later this week or next week.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT: MUNDARING SHIRE COUNCIL

Rates: Criteria

361. Mr CLARKO, to the Minister for Local Government:

I have given the Minister some brief notice of this question.

(1) Did the Shire of Mundaring strike its municipal rate for 1985-86 in accordance with the requirements of section 548 (1)(a) of the Local Government Act?

(2) If not, what action does he propose to take to rectify the matter?

Mr CARR replied:

I thank the member for some notice of his intention to ask the question.

(1) The routine examination of local government budgets undertaken by departmental officers has raised the possibility that the Shire of Mundaring may have budgeted for a deficit in contravention of the Local Government Act. Departmental officers have corresponded with the council in an endeavour to reconcile or clarify the different interpretations as to the correctness of the budget.

(2) Any action to be taken by me will depend upon the outcome of the consultations between the departmental officers and the shire.

SUPERANNUATION BOARD

Annual Report: Tabling

362. Mr LAURANCE, to the Treasurer:

When does he anticipate that the annual report of the State Superannuation Board for the financial year 1984-85 will be tabled?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

I do not know the answer to the question, but if the member puts it on the Notice Paper I will obtain one.

SUPERANNUATION BOARD

Annual Report: Delay

363. Mr HASSELL, to the Treasurer:

(1) Is he concerned about the enormous delay in tabling the annual report of the State Superannuation Board?

(2) Will he investigate the reason for the delay, bearing in mind that the report is well and truly overdue, and give a direction that it be produced for tabling?

Mr BRIAN BURKE replied:

(1) and (2) I do not want to express concern without checking on the situation, and I will do that. If the facts are as outlined by the Leader of the Opposition I will cause a hurry-up in the production of the report.

ENERGY: PETROLEUM

Exploration Permit

364. Mr HASSELL, to the Minister for Minerals and Energy:

Has his attention been drawn, as was indicated would be the case, to the matters I raised in the grievance debate last week concerning the non-allocation of petroleum exploration permits to the company Marvel Petroleum NL; has he examined the matter; and what conclusion has he reached?

Mr PARKER replied:

My attention has been drawn to the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition in the grievance debate last week, and I must say that as usual the Leader of the Opposition has got it wrong. The position is that the area concerned, L76-29, was available on an across-the-counter basis under the

Petroleum Act. A group of four companies led by Strata Oil NL and including a company then known as Spectrum Gold, and now known as Marvel Petroleum, applied for that area. I understand Marvel Petroleum is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Kia Ora Gold Corporation NL, and it changed on 11 June 1985 to its current name.

The same area was applied for by Amoco Australia Ltd with which, contrary to the claims of the Leader of the Opposition in his statement, I had absolutely no prior association but certainly had discussions about this issue, as I did with a number of people. There is no association close or otherwise, between me and Amoco petroleum.

Amoco has put in to the Government a regional programme which involved a very large area of the Canning Basin, not just the area in question. It involved large areas of the Canning Basin, most of which had not been extensively explored before, and in particular most had not had extensive exploration by way of the extent of seismic activity or depths of drilling proposed by Amoco petroleum.

The block concerned, which was the only block applied for by the group led by Strata Oil, was a small part of the overall regional programme. When at various times the assessments were made by the department of the differing programmes put forward it became evident to the petroleum division of the department that the exploration philosophies of the two groups were completely incompatible, particularly in the depth of the target horizons where Amoco would have preferred to drill deep wells to fully evaluate the section, and Strata's wells would have been shallow.

It also appeared to the petroleum division that Amoco had a better understanding of the geology of the area. It appeared obvious that Strata would only undertake to carry out the minimum programme whereas Amoco would undoubtedly increase its seismic coverage considerably, even in the first year. As well as that, one of the things which is required under the

Petroleum Act is, as I pointed out in answer to a question from the Leader of the Opposition a few days ago, that one is required to have regard for the financial and technical capabilities of the groups involved, and it appeared that two of the groups involved in this application, including Spectrum Gold as it was then called, now Marvel Petroleum, did not have the financial and technical capabilities and would require at the very least guarantees from parent companies.

Before we decided finally to award the area to Amoco I suggested that given the fact that Amoco would eventually need to take on Australian partners as part of the Australianisation of the permits, especially if anything were found, it should be suggested to Amoco and to the Australian explorers that they should form a 50 per cent Australian partnership and do it together. Over a period of about four months attempts were made by the parties to negotiate with each other to find a basis on which they could make joint arrangements to explore that one area of the broader area that Amoco would explore. It occurred to me that if that went satisfactorily it might even give the local group a good entree into the other important work Amoco was doing. However, after a period of four months or so it became clear there would not be any compatibility between the partners, and both of them—

Mr Hassell: Amoco withdrew.

Mr PARKER: No, both groups advised me separately that negotiations had broken down. In view of that I had to make a decision on which was the best application in terms of the exploration of the petroleum significance of the area, and unquestionably on the advice of the petroleum division the Amoco proposition was the best. So the permit was awarded to Amoco.

In addition to that, the Leader of the Opposition made statements or quoted statements coming from Marvel Petroleum—I am not sure from reading *Hansard* whether they were his own statements or quotes—and referred to the fact that this sort of thing was the reason that petroleum explo-

ration was going down in this State but up in other States like South Australia and Queensland. That is patently absurd. The facts are exactly the reverse. In each year, 1984 and 1985 as is currently projected, records have been broken within the State for the number of wells drilled and the kilometrage of seismic lines surveyed—very considerably, not just by small margins but by a large boost in exploration activity.

This State leads the country—and that is not just the case since I have been Minister; we have for some time led the country—in the level of onshore exploration. In the last two years this State's leadership in that field has advanced further to the extent that it has far outstripped activities in other States despite the fact that more encouraging oil shows have been found in Queensland and South Australia than in Western Australia. Despite that, in Western Australia the exploration activity, as opposed to appraisal drilling and things of that sort, has well and truly exceeded the drilling in either Queensland or South Australia, and the rate of increase has been higher in our State than in those two States. The fact of Amoco's involvement in this area is very important because it is a company of tremendous significance in the world and one which has an extremely good record in finding oil.

Mr Hassell: Who said it did not? The question is why you did not give the local company a go.

Mr PARKER: Because Amoco was much better, as I have already said. On the advice of my departmental officers Amoco was much better and a couple of the proponents of the other group, including Spectrum Gold, or Marvel

Petroleum as it is now known, were not adjudged by my department as being capable of being involved in the work at all.

The point is that the application was better. I just wanted to make the point that Amoco has an excellent record—one of the best in the world; better even than some of the bigger companies, although it is a big company itself, and it came up for the first time with a major programme for the Canning Basin. It will be required to bring in Australian participation if it finds oil and gets to the development stage, but it is prepared to spend \$40 million on the area, far more than the other group was prepared to spend. It is prepared to do a lot of work in Western Australia which will create jobs for Western Australians, finding oil, we hope, in a way which was adjudged by the professional officers of my department as being a much better exploration programme for this State than that put forward by the alternative group.

SUPERANNUATION BOARD

Annual Report: Tabling

365. **Mr BRIAN BURKE** (Treasurer):

With your forbearance, Mr Speaker, and in keeping with my general policy of helping the Opposition, I advise we have contacted the State Superannuation Board and it is hoped the annual report will be tabled this week. A meeting has been arranged tomorrow between the Auditor General, the chairman of the board, and the board's officers to discuss some final aspects, so the Opposition can sleep easy.